

King receives cables

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday received a cable from Kuwaiti Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah in reply to his cable in which the King had expressed condolences on the death of Sheikh Ali Sabah Salem Al Sabah. Sheikh Jaber expressed appreciation and thanks to the King for his condolences. He thanked King Hussein and the Jordanian people for their sympathy over the death of Sheikh Ali. The King also Wednesday received phonecalls from Sultan Hassan Bolkiah of Brunei, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Sultan Qaboos Ben Sa'id of Oman. The leaders congratulated the King on the success of his surgery which he underwent in the United States and expressed good wishes on Eid Al Adha.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الوابي

Happy 'Eid Al Adha

The Jordan Times will not be published on Saturday, April 19 on account of 'Eid Al Adha' holidays. The next issue will appear on Sunday, April 20. The editor and staff of the Jordan Times wish readers and advertisers a very happy 'Eid Al Adha.

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Price: Jordan 200Fils

Jordan-EU initial partnership deal to be implemented in 1999

By Ghalia Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After six long rounds of negotiations, Jordan and the European Union (EU) today initiated a partnership agreement at the Euro-Mediterranean conference in Malta.

The agreement, which will be implemented on January 1, 1999, will pave the way for a free zone area by the year 2010. It will also accelerate negotiations for Jordan's membership in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which are expected to conclude by the end of this year.

The accord initiated yesterday falls within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership called for by the Barcelona conference in November 1995.

It will encourage more direct European investment in Jordan, facilitate technology transfer and provide

free access to EU markets for the Kingdom's agricultural and industrial products.

In addition, it will allow Europeans to establish funds for the rehabilitation of Jordanian industry and its agricultural sector.

Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Amari earlier told the Jordan Times that the EU will provide Jordan with technical and financial assistance to identify areas needed to upgrade quality and increase competitiveness in both industry and agriculture.

The Kingdom sought to increase the quotas and to expand the variety of agricultural products that it can export under the agreement. The new partnership will now guarantee that.

Meanwhile, both sides agreed to a customs-free status on certain commodities, which entails neither tariff quotas nor time

restrictions. Some of these products include citrus fruits, juices and some vegetables.

Other produce such as tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, eggplants, garlic and melon coming from Jordan will be restricted to an agreed timetable.

Still, other products will be allowed into EU markets free of customs duties but with tariff quotas and a set timetable. These include tomato concentrates (3,900 tonnes), 'new' potatoes (1,000 tonnes), processed fruits and vegetables (2,000 tonnes).

Under the agreement, Jordan will benefit from cumulative rules of origin, which means that the Kingdom can add any inputs imported from Europe to its products, and the product will still be considered as originating from Jordan.

Jordan agreed to four lists of goods which, if supplied by the EU countries, will

have import duties either totally eliminated or abolished over a period of five years.

A list of 492 capital goods will be exempted from customs duties immediately after the agreement comes into effect.

A smaller non-exempt 'negative' list includes cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, small cars and busses, tomato paste, used clothes, carpets and furniture.

A list of industrial goods imported into Jordan will be subject to a gradual exemption from customs duties and charges at a rate of 20 per cent annually for five years. This list includes pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, industrial raw material, spare parts for industrial machinery, industrial inputs, industrial chemical materials, basic consumer commodities and fertilisers.

(Continued on page 3)

Arafat, Levy meet in Malta in a sudden change of heart ahead of meeting Ross

VALLETTA (AP) — In a surprise change of heart, Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy met face-to-face Wednesday in a bid to salvage the Middle East peace process, officials said.

The meeting came after Arab and European diplomats pressured the two to hold the breakthrough talks during a conference of 27 European and Mediterranean nations.

It was the highest-level meeting since the peace process stalled last month when Israel began construction on a new Jewish settlement project last month in Arab East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians regard as their future capital. Clashes between West Bank protesters and Israeli security forces threatened to seriously push back the peace efforts.

Conference organisers said the meeting took place in a hotel just outside Valletta, the walled capital city of the Mediterranean island nation of Malta.

Mr. Levy, in his speech to the conference Tuesday, said the "storm clouds over the Middle East" must be dissipated. The Palestinian president also sounded moderate.

The two men expressed a desire to resume dialogue, but declined to immediately hold private talks despite



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Israeli's Foreign Minister David Levy and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa during their meeting at the end of the Euro-Mediterranean conference on Wednesday (Reuters photo)

appeals from European Union (EU) envoys.

It appeared that they would depart from Malta with only promises to discuss the crumbling peace efforts. Their abrupt decision to meet in Malta was an achievement for EU leaders, who have sought a wider role in Middle East political affairs. It also was an important ice-breaker as the U.S. Mideast envoy returns to the region.

Dennis Ross was scheduled to meet later Wednesday in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Later, he was expected to see Mr. Arafat in Gaza City.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spoke to Mr. Arafat by telephone on Tuesday. State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns said. He did not elaborate.

The EU's unstated goal is to use its considerable economic partnership with Israel and Arab nations to carve out a bigger political

role in the Middle East peace process, of which the United States has long been the driving force.

European officials stress they seek not to replace Washington. However, they feel they deserve a better shot at the peace process given Europe's sizeable economic aid programme: \$2.3 billion a year to Israel and its Arab neighbours.

In the autonomous Palestinian areas, the EU funds

(Continued on page 3)

Ross meets Netanyahu on mission to save peace; to meet Arafat separately

TEL AVIV (AFP) — U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross met Wednesday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a new push to get the Israeli-Palestinian peace process moving again.

Mr. Ross, who went straight into talks with Mr. Netanyahu after arriving here from Washington, was to travel on to the Gaza Strip to meet Palestinian President Yasser Arafat later in the evening.

The Palestinians said they would present Mr. Ross with a five-point plan for a resumption of peace talks including an immediate halt to Jewish settlement building on Arab land.

Just ahead of Mr. Ross's mission, the European Union helped break the ice between the two sides when Mr. Arafat met with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in Malta.

The meeting on the sidelines of a Euro-Mediterranean conference was the first between Arafat and a senior Israeli official since March 18 when work began on a new Jewish settlement

in Arab East Jerusalem, plunging the peace process into crisis.

Their talks did not reduce the rift between the two sides. "Nothing of substance was discussed," Mr. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani said.

But Mr. Levy was more positive. "Our differences remain, but dialogue has resumed," he told Israel Radio, adding that the Palestinians had agreed to resume security cooperation with the Jewish state.

Nevertheless, Mr. Ross faces an uphill task in getting peace talks going again.

Palestinian officials said the U.S. envoy must secure an Israeli pledge to stop work on the 6,500-home settlement on the Jerusalem hilltop of Jabal Abu Ghneim — something Mr. Netanyahu has repeatedly said he won't do.

Saeb Erakat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, said: "If the mediator's aim is not to stop the bulldozers at Jabal Abu Ghneim, then he has come to the region to save Mr. Netanyahu and not

the peace process."

"To save the peace process, he has to put an end to this man's (Netanyahu's) actions which are a danger to peace," Mr. Erakat said, just before Mr. Ross's arrival in the region.

The Palestinians' list of five demands include a halt to Israeli settlement building in the territories, including Jabal Abu Ghneim, and a guarantee that negotiations will be based on the principle of land-for-peace, Mr. Erakat said.

Mr. Arafat will also insist that Israel respect 34 outstanding commitments under the autonomy accords, and that negotiations on a final Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement run parallel to talks on the interim accords.

The fifth point concerns Israel's demand that Mr. Arafat crack down on terrorism before peace talks can resume, Mr. Erakat said.

"Just as peace and violence are irreconcilable, so are peace and settlement building," he said.

In Washington, State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns said the United States has "presented some ideas" to the Israelis and the Palestinians "and we need responses."

U.S. President Bill Clinton wants the Israeli leader to freeze the construction of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and Mr. Arafat to step up the fight against terror by Islamist militants.

Mr. Clinton is "disappointed" with Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to accept any of his proposals to resume the peace process, Israeli Army Radio said Monday.

The president is ready to intervene only if Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat agree to pay the political price, it said.

The West Bank was calm Wednesday after almost daily protests since work began on Jabal Abu Ghneim. However, Israel completely sealed off the territory until further notice because of increased fears of suicide bomb attacks.

Mecca fire death toll rises to 250; 2 million pilgrims continue rituals

MECCA (AFP) — Two million Muslims prayed on a hill near Mecca on Wednesday as the death toll from the huge blaze that ripped through 70,000 pilgrims' tents soared to around 250, mostly Asians.

While the mass of pilgrims gathered for the climax of the annual Hajj, at Mount Arafat 20 kilometres from Mecca, officials sifted through the charred wreckage of Tuesday's fire at nearby Mina.

New tents were hastily erected to replace those incinerated by the inferno, which also left more than 2,000 people injured.

"We have been told (by Saudi authorities) that the figure stands at around 250 killed and 2,000 injured, mostly from the subcontinent," said an Indian official at a crisis centre set up to cope with concerned relatives.

He told AFP that around 150 of the dead were from

India, and that other casualties were from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Thailand. Reports from Islamabad said around 60 Pakistanis died in the fire.

The last Saudi toll said 217 pilgrims had been killed and 1,290 injured, although a Saudi official told that many of the injured had life-threatening burns.

The identification of victims is being hampered by the charred state of many of the bodies. In addition, the Saudi authorities insist all pilgrims hand over their passports on arrival in Mecca.

The inferno was sparked by a gas canister used for cooking and fanned by strong winds it swept through the Mina encampment, about five kilometres south of Mecca, witnesses said.

No official cause has been given for the blaze, but the authorities do not believe it

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday sent a cable to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia expressing his sorrow over the tragic deaths of Muslim pilgrims in Mina on Tuesday.

In his cable, King Hussein said "While expressing my own deep sympathy and those of the people and government of Jordan I implore God to bless the souls of the dead and wish the injured speedy recovery." The King also praised the Saudi Arabian government's speedy measures to extinguish the blaze and deal with this tragic situation. King Hussein also telephoned King Fahd to express his condolences to the families of the dead and his solace to the families of injured. King Fahd thanked the King for his concern about the pilgrims. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan also Wednesday sent a cable of sympathy to Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz expressing appreciation for the efforts made to deal with the emergency. He wished the injured speedy recovery and safe return home. Also, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali sent cables of consolation to King Fahd, Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz and Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz. Dr. Majali thanked the Saudi Arabian government for its attention to the safety and welfare of the pilgrims and its strenuous efforts in dealing with the tragedy.

was started deliberately.

"According to the first reports, we are talking about an accident as opposed to a criminal act," said the governor of Mecca.

Prince Majed Ben Abdul Aziz, late Tuesday.

However, there was no mention of the fire in Saudi

(Continued on page 3)

Israeli army seals off W. Bank after reports of expected attacks

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has sealed off the West Bank and banned Palestinian workers from entering the Jewish state because of an increased risk of attack by anti-Israeli militants, an army spokesman said Wednesday.

Entry to Israeli territory was "forbidden from Tuesday 2200 GMT onwards to the Palestinians of the West Bank," the spokesman said.

Thousands more Palestinian workers were barred from entering Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The move was ordered by Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai because of an increased

risk of attack, and came after Israeli army restrictions on entry to Israel from the West Bank had been eased.

On Monday, the Israeli authorities said all Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip aged at least 30, married and possessing a work permit could enter Israel. But Tuesday's order annuls that decision.

However the easing of restrictions remains valid for the Gaza Strip, the army spokesman said.

The Palestinian territories had been totally closed off following a suicide bomb attack in Tel Aviv on March 21 which left three people dead.

On the Occasion of
EID AL-ADHA

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is honoured to convey to

HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN

and to the

ARAB & ISLAMIC NATIONS

Its most cordial wishes and gra

Pope Shenuda accuses Muslim Brotherhood guide of apostasy

CAIRO (AFP) — The head of the Coptic Christian Church accused the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood of "apostasy" for calling for the taxation of Copts and their expulsion from the army, in an interview published on Wednesday.

"Is this apostasy, defeat or a misunderstanding?" Pope Shenuda III told Al-Musawwar news magazine, when asked to comment on the controversial statements made earlier this month by Mustafa Mashhur.

Mr. Mashhur told the English-language *Ahram Weekly* on April 3 that the imposition of jizya, or a tax, on the country's Coptic Christians "is part of Sharia (Islamic law) which also entails their exclusion from the army."

"Jizya is a tax which Christians pay to be defended by Muslims instead of defending themselves," said Mr. Mashhur, whose group supports the

creation by peaceful means of an Islamic state in Egypt. "When we have an Islamic state, the army will be the cornerstone of its defence. The soldiers should belong to the same faith... to take the right stand against anyone trying to attack this Islamic state," Mr. Mashhur said.

"If we have non-Muslims in the army and a Christian country attacks us, then Christian members of the armed forces could change their allegiance and become agents for the enemy," Mr. Mashhur said.

Pope Shenuda said such calls contributed to "harming Egypt and dividing it along religious lines."

"The jizya contradicts everything the constitution says about equality for all Egyptians," Pope Shenuda said.

He admitted that Copts — who represent 5.8 per cent of Egypt's Muslim-dominated population — were a "numerical" minority

although he said they were politically important. He also ruled out the creation of a Coptic party which would "harm our interests."

Mr. Mashhur's statements triggered a wave of condemnation in Egypt and Christian lawyer, Mamduh Nakhla, filed a libel suit against him.

The opposition Tagammu Party demanded the "expulsion of the Muslim Brotherhood from the (opposition's) committee of coordination of parties and political forces."

Mr. Mashhur shot back saying his statements to *Ahram Weekly* journalist Khaled Dawoud had been misinterpreted.

Outlawed but tolerated by the authorities, the Muslim Brotherhood has recently been accused of backing a violent fundamentalist anti-government campaign launched in March 1992.



EID IN BEIRUT: A child helps his father to weigh a sheep on a Beirut street on Wednesday. Lebanon's Muslims have been purchasing livestock which they will slaughter on the first day of Eid Al-Adha which commemorates the Biblical and Koranic patriarch of Abraham's sacrifice of a sheep in place of his son Ismail (Reuters photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fatwa saved Kuwaiti pilgrims from fire

KUWAIT (AFP) — Kuwaiti pilgrims were saved from the large fire that destroyed pilgrims' tents near the Holy Saudi city of Mecca by a religious decree, the official KUNA news agency reported on Wednesday. It said a Saudi cleric, Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Saleh Al Uthaimin, passed a fatwa, or decree, ordering the Kuwaitis not to spend the night at Mina, the scene of Tuesday's fire around five kilometres south of Mecca. According to Muslim tradition, pilgrims should spend the night at Mina before moving on to Mount Arafat for the climax of the annual pilgrimage, or hajj. "The fatwa of Sheikh Al Uthaimin helped save the Kuwaiti pilgrims from the dangers of gigantic fire," said the agency.

Hundreds of liquor bottles crushed in UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Arabian desert was soaked with liquor as hundreds of bottles were crushed into the sand by municipality bulldozers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), local newspapers reported on Wednesday. More than 300 bottles of whisky, beer and other alcoholic drinks were piled up in the eastern emirate of Fujairah in the Gulf of Oman on Tuesday before bulldozers buried them under the sand, the papers said. The liquor has been seized in separate raids over the past few months as part of a crackdown on illegal alcohol trade. Alcohol is banned in public in the UAE but non-Muslims have access to liquor at hotels and authorised shops.

Mubarak to release prisoners for Adha

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has ordered the release from jail of 1,100 common law prisoners to mark the 'Eid Al-Adha, government newspapers said Wednesday. The convicts, who have served half their jail terms and been cited for good behaviour, will be freed Thursday, the first day of the feast, an Interior Ministry official told the papers.

Kuwait military says spy blimp crashed

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's military denied it had let a blimp designed to detect Iraqi troop movements float away, saying it crashed earlier this month while landing. An unidentified Kuwait military official, quoted by the Kuwait News Agency on Tuesday night, said the helium-filled balloon, fitted with radar, crashed as ground staff were pulling it back in strong winds. Diplomats in Kuwait last week said the blimp flew away and a Kuwaiti newspaper reported the defence ministry had formed a committee to investigate the loss. The blimp was launched last June to monitor the tiny Gulf Arab state's borders. Experts say the balloon and its equipment is worth some \$15 million.

Arab League slams Jewish state on Cana massacre anniversary

CAIRO (Agencies) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid on Wednesday denounced Israel's occupation of a border strip in South Lebanon, on the first anniversary of the Cana massacre.

He urged the U.N. Security Council to force Israel to pull out, in a statement to mark the deaths of 105 civilians at a U.N. refugee camp in Cana, South Lebanon, in an Israeli artillery attack last April 18.

The killings took place during Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" operation against Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas in Lebanon.

"April 18 should be a day of Arab mourning and a day of Arab solidarity with the Lebanese people in their struggle to recover all their occupied territory," Dr. Abdul Meguid said.

"Israel carried out an ugly crime," he said from the league's Cairo headquarters.

He called on the U.N. Security Council "to strive to force Israel to implement Security Council resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli struggle and the Palestinian cause."

Dr. Abdul Meguid referred to U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 which calls on Israel to withdraw unconditionally from the self-styled "security zone" it occupies in South Lebanon.

League fails in Somalia mediation

Arab League officials failed Tuesday to bridge differences between a Somali warlord and opposing factions.

Hussein Aided, head of the country's most powerful faction, refused in two days of meetings with league officials to attend a June conference of national reconciliation in Bosaso, a north-eastern Somali port town, Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported.

The aim of the conference was to build a government of national unity for Somalia, which has had no functioning leadership since 1991. The country has disintegrated into fiefdoms of warring clans.

Gen. Aided's meeting with Dr. Abdul Meguid and other league officials came as part of the Cairo-based organisation's attempts to resolve the conflict.

Gen. Aided also met Monday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amr Musa, who have tried to mediate.

Regional and international mediation has failed in the past, with the faction leaders signing agreements only to violate them weeks, or days, later.

Iraqi Kurdish factions exchange prisoners

CAIRO (AP) — The two main Kurdish factions in northern Iraq exchanged more than 130 prisoners, who were taken during fighting last year, one of the factions said Tuesday.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) said it released 71 prisoners, while the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) released 61. The exchange took place Monday near Kuysanjiq, 180 kilometres north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, the statement said.

Earlier this month, two senior U.S. officials held talks in northern Iraq with Kurdish leaders to try to mediate a settlement.

The KDP, with the help of Iraq's army, drove the PUK out of portions of northern Iraq in August. The two sides signed a U.S.-brokered ceasefire in October. But the subsequent talks in Ankara, Turkey, have stalled.

The two parties took control of northern Iraq shortly after the end of the 1991 Gulf war under military protection provided by war allies the United States, Britain and France.

Yemenis set to reelect architects of harsh economic reforms

By Patrick Rahr
AFP

SANAA — Despite bearing the brunt of harsh economic reforms, Yemeni voters in the April 27 parliamentary polls are expected to reelect the leadership which imposed the recovery programme.

Yemen launched the programme, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), right after the 1994 civil war. The reforms since have eroded the buying power of ordinary Yemenis.

But diplomats say the ruling coalition between President Ali Abdullah Saleh's General People's Congress and the Islamic party Al Islah is still expected to retain its majority in the 301-seat parliament.

The opposition Yemen Socialist Party of the south, meanwhile, has

said it would boycott the elections.

"The people seem to understand that they are paying for the mistakes of the past," rather than criticising the current policies, said a high-ranking Western diplomat who asked not to be named.

Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, a senior figure in the Information Ministry, explained that since Yemen's unification in 1990, "the government was working on politics, not dealing with the economy. The economy was its last priority."

Stark political differences between the north, which Mr. Saleh has ruled since 1978, and the former South Yemen, run by Marxists between 1967 and 1990, sparked a war between southern separatists and the government that was put down in two months.

Yemen has since been

working to build a more stable international image and put its economic house in order.

In two waves of reforms, the Saleh government has cut subsidies on petrol and electricity, and raised tariffs on services such as electricity and telephones.

While the moves have hurt Yemenis in their pocketbooks, inflation has plunged from 70 per cent in 1994, the war year, to 25 per cent in 1996. It is set to dip below 10 per cent this year, according to estimates of international institutions.

The exchange rate of the rial on the free market has also stabilised at 125 to the dollar since February 1995. "The stabilisation of the rial is a success story," said another diplomat.

Order has likewise been restored to public spending, bringing the 1994

budget deficit of 17 per cent of gross domestic product down to 1.7 per cent in the current budget.

"Social sectors took a beating as a result of this effort to keep the deficit under control," acknowledged Omer Yucer, coordinator of U.N. development activities in Yemen. But many Yemenis do not appear to bear a grudge against the government.

"The government didn't have a choice," said Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al Kawkabani, a 51-year-old father of five children, four of whom are still of school age.

"The same thing happened in Egypt and Jordan," where state subsidies on essential goods have also been slashed," said Mr. Kawkabani, who works for a cloth salesman.

Ahmad Ali Al Yemeni, 26, said he was pleased

that Yemen has been "fending for itself" since Saudi Arabia and Kuwait cut off their lifeline aid because of Sanaa's support for Baghdad during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

"From what the government tells us, we can hope for an improvement of the situation with the accord that has been signed with Total" for developing natural gas in Yemen, he said.

The accord, approved by the Yemeni parliament in March, calls for the construction of a gas liquefaction plant and an export terminal by a consortium headed by Total of France with U.S. and South Korean partners.

But the project is only due for launch in 2001 and it will take several more years before annual revenue reaches the level of \$700 million as projected by the government, an oil expert warned.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19
PROGRAMME TWO
13:00Muppet Show
13:45French Cartoon
14:45Comedy — Parenthood
15:20French Varieties
16:20Film — Time Game
18:00French Programmes
19:00News in French
19:15French Programme
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — The Nanny
20:00Cinema, Cinema
20:30 Wizard of Oz In Concert
22:00News English
22:30 Queen-Best Seller (Part 1 of 3)
23:59French Movie
(Eid programmes are subject to slight changes)

PRAYER TIMES

04:39Fajr
06:01(Sunrise) Duha
12:35Dhuhr
16:12Asr
19:10Maghreb
20:31Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Armenian Catholic Church

Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church

Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church

Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.

675691.

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel.

614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Fine weather conditions will prevail during the weekend becoming cool at night with winds northwesterly moderate. In

Aqaba, it will be warm and sunny, winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Mini/Max. Temperatures
Amman04/17
Aqaba11/25
Deserts02/21
Jordan Valley10/24

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 15, Aqaba, 25 Humidity

readings: Amman 52 per cent,

Aqaba 38 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Issam Al Asmar890504

Dr. Khalidoun Kloub816715

Dr. Nidal Al As'ad751672

Dr. Abdul Rahman Mustafa744685

Firas pharmacy661912

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asema pharmacy637055

Nairoukh pharmacy623672

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy644945

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh250080

Al Quds pharmacy(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Hafez Salifi914144

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Department661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111.

637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints897467

Amman Municipality Complaints787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs661101

Jordan Television774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority815615

Electric Power Company636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53300

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre813813/32

Khalidi Maternity64281/6

Akileh Maternity642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity

642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845

Al-Muasher Hospital66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen77101/3

Al-Bashir,775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital602240/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA:

Zarga Govt. Hospital09983323

Zarga National Hospital09800560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital09990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital02127555

Greek Catholic Hospital02172725

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital021247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital039314111

642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845

Al-Muasher Hospital66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen77101/3

Al-Bashir,775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital602240/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199

ZARQA:

Zarga Govt. Hospital09983323

Zarga National Hospital09800560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital09990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital02127555

Greek Catholic Hospital02172725

King receives cables of good wishes to mark the feast of 'Eid Al Adha

AMMAN (Petra) — On the eve of the 'Eid Al Adha Feast (feast of sacrifice), marking the culmination of religious rites performed by pilgrims in Mecca, His Majesty King Hussein received cables of good wishes from senior government officials and individuals from the private sector as well as heads of tribes, professional unions, and other prominent public figures.

The King received messages wishing him continued health and happiness as well as wishing the Arab and Islamic Worlds further progress and prosperity. A cable came from U.S. President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton who expressed their good wishes to the King, Her Majesty Queen Noor and the Jordanian people.



In his cable, Mr. Clinton stated his appreciation of the King's endeavours towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Assad of Syria, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen, President Zeln Al Abidine Ben Ali of Tunisia, President Elias Hrawi of Lebanon, President Liamine Zeroual of Algeria, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifeh of Bahrain, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifeh Al Thani of Qatar, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Sultan Hassan Bolkeih of Brunei, President Suleiman Demirel of Turkey, Indonesian President Suharto and other heads of state.

Those sending cables to the King also included Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Parliament speakers, chiefs of the Jordan Armed Forces, and security services, heads of

chambers of commerce and industry, political party representatives, mayors, heads of Islamic and Christian groups, refugee camp representatives and others.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday also received messages of good wishes on the 'Eid Al Adha feast from leaders in Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Jordanian public figures.

Religious prayers on the holy occasion will be held in various mosques around the Kingdom while Jordan Armed Forces artillery units will fire guns during the feast days during the noon, afternoon and evening prayers.

All government departments and public institutions will remain closed until Monday morning to mark the holy occasion.

Fund-raising run set for late April

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Terry Fox / Al Amal Centre Run will be held in Amman April 25, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, as part of a national fund-raising campaign for cancer patients in Jordan. Rapporteur of Al Amal Cancer Centre's National Task Force Dr. Abdullah Khatib announced Wednesday.

The run, organised by Al Amal Cancer Centre in conjunction with the Canadian embassy in Jordan, will kick off at nine a.m. from Gate Number Four of Al Hussein Sports Centre, he said.

The race will then head for Al Amal Cancer Centre, before returning to its starting point, Dr. Khatib maintained.

Participants in Friday's event will cover 11 kilometres, beginning at Al Hussein Sports Centre to Al Amal Cancer Centre, near the University of Jordan, continuing to Medina Street and then to the Telecommunications Centre at Tlaa Al Ali, on to the Embassy of China and then to Safeway and back to Al Hussein Sports Centre.

At the sports centre there will be a presentation of prizes and exhibitions aimed at promoting public health awareness.

The marathon is directed towards the encouragement of cancer research and public awareness as well as collecting donations to finance cancer research programmes.

Dr. Khatib estimated at least 20,000 participants of various age groups as to run in the event.

Al Amal Centre was created through public donations as well as a telethon in

October of 1992 and a previous marathon of 25,000 people which raised a cumulative JD 7 million.

The centre, considered the first comprehensive facility for cancer research in the region, provides screening, early detection, treatment and public awareness regarding cancer prevention.

The proceeds of the run will benefit both Al Amal Cancer Centre and various research projects.

The Terry Fox run has been held in 52 countries since 1981 to raise funds for research in order to combat cancer.

The run is named after a young Canadian who died of the disease while raising funds for its cure.

Last month, HRH Prince Raad Ben Zeid, who is expected to supervise the event, maintained that any

donations for the cause would be accepted including refreshments for participants at the finish line.

Another bid to raise funds for the centre's operation was announced by the centre's national task force last February.

The group stated that it has embarked on a comprehensive health care programme aimed at providing affordable cancer treatment and surgery.

The centre is accepting membership applications with costs beginning at an annual JD 10 per person for Jordanians and non-Jordanian residents in the Kingdom.

This fee entitles the member to receive basic treatment in the case of illness, and for an annual JD 30 the insured could receive unlimited treatment.

'Government focused on strong ties with the Arab World'

AMMAN (J.T.) — In an interview published Wednesday in the Arabic weekly Shihani, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutaweh maintained that one of the new government's priorities is to safeguard strong ties with the rest of the Arab World.

However, he confirmed that the government will also pursue dialogue with Israel in order to advance Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. "We have always tried to play a positive role in helping the Palestinians regain their rights," the minister said. "If we halt this dialogue we cannot fulfil our role."

In responding to a rumour that the previous government of Abdul Karim Kabariti was to annul the Ministry of Information, Dr. Mutaweh said that if the ministry is to be annulled, it must be so done by Parliament (which is currently in recess).

Therefore, this issue is not a topic for discussion in the foreseeable future, he added.

On a similar note, the minister was asked as to whether or not the government was planning to annul the Department for Combating Corruption, initiated by the previous government; he stated that he possessed "no knowledge about this subject."

Dr. Mutaweh emphasised

that parliamentary elections would be held on schedule and that the termination of the present Parliament is final, barring an extraordinary session convened through a Royal Decree.

In response to a query regarding the status of Jordanian-Israeli relations, the minister affirmed that Jordan would adhere to its principled foreign policy and inasmuch, there is need to relate to Arab states from a strategic perspective, as Arabs seeking to unify their ranks and enhance joint Arab action for the benefit of the Arab nation.

"Jordan has a real interest in maintaining strong relations with other Arab states, however differences in views result from distinct approaches to various issues," Dr. Mutaweh said. "It is comparable to siblings of the same family who do not always agree and this is only natural."

Dr. Mutaweh was asked to clarify a recent statement by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali in which he described a statement by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as interference in other countries' internal affairs. Ms. Albright was quoted as stating that the embargo on Iraq can only be lifted when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is no longer in power.

He said that he personally believed that the prime

minister's statement had been misinterpreted.

Dr. Mutaweh described Jordan as desirous of ending the suffering of the Iraqi people. "Any government statement reflects [Jordan's] conviction that the sufferings of the Iraqi people should cease and, therefore, any statements by the prime minister or any other official emanate from this conviction."

When asked to confirm the veracity of reports stating that a number of students were detained following allegations that they had intended to attack the Israeli embassy in Amman, Dr. Mutaweh responded thusly: "After reading the press reports, I asked the minister of interior whether such an attempt was intended for the embassy and he responded in the negative. I have nothing to add to this. In regards to the reported students' arrests, I can neither confirm nor deny the reports."

The minister was also asked to comment on press reports which alleged that the Kingdom intended to pay \$300,000 to the families of the Israeli schoolgirls who were killed in Baqura last month.

"I have no information at all about this case. The government has never discussed this issue and I only learned of it in the press," he responded.

Shihani then inquired as to

plans for allocating financial and administrative independence to the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, the minister responded positively, adding that such independence would offer such impetus for workers to improve productivity.

"We are striving to procure the appropriate mechanism to ensure that the corporation achieve a qualitative improvement and we hope that a new law in this matter will be enacted by the next Parliament," he said.

Shihani also published the results of a survey it conducted regarding the general opinion of the public in regards to the new government, with 354 persons participating in the sample taken.

According to Shihani, 63 per cent of those polled declared a high opinion of Prime Minister Majali, while 52.2 per cent rated the new ministers in the present government as "fair" and 78 per cent considered the representation of political parties in the new government as "insufficient."

The public was mainly focused on the prime minister and his ability to tackle the challenges ahead in both domestic and foreign affairs, according to Shihani.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince receives official

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday received Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Victor Posovayuk and the two reviewed the Middle East peace process. Prince Hassan stressed the need for giving impetus to peace in order to reach a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the region. They also discussed bilateral relations and their means of enhancement.

Sudanese minister arrives for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Sudanese Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Abdul Rahim Mohammad Hussein arrived here Wednesday on a short visit to the Kingdom during which he will relay a message to His Majesty King Hussein from Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir. He was received upon arrival by Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutaweh.

Tawjihi students to take exams

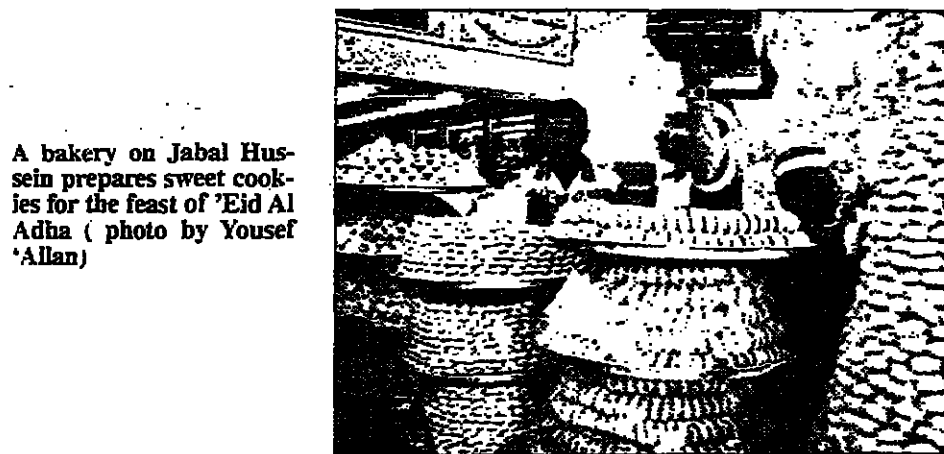
AMMAN (J.T.) — Approximately 12,696 Tawjihi students will take their matriculation exams in practical fields on Monday, according to Vocational Education Director General Mustafa Obeid. Mr. Obeid affirmed that approximately 3,435 students from the agricultural field will take the exam, 359 from the commercial field, 4,494 from the nursing field, 403 from the hotel management field and 3,210 from the domestic economy field.

Irbid to create new gardens

IRBID (Petra) — Irbid Municipality Wednesday finalised plans for the construction of three new public gardens in Irbid. Municipality's President Abdul Raouf Tell estimated the total cost of creating these gardens as totalling JD150,000.



A sheep is transported to be sacrificed for the feast of 'Eid Al Adha (photo by Yousef 'Allan)



A bakery on Jabal Hussein prepares sweet cookies for the feast of 'Eid Al Adha (photo by Yousef 'Allan)

WHAT'S GOING ON

GERMAN-AMERICAN FILM WEEK

* "The Magnificent Obsession" (English) at the American Center, Abdou on Saturday at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Lebanese plastic artists at Hamraoui Arts Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until April 24.
* Exhibition of frescoes of Jordanian mosaics and Fayum portraits by Dorothy Mango at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artsana, Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858), until May 10.
* Display of products, for adults and children in celebration of Eid Al Adha, by Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) at the NHF premises, off Wadi Saqra (Tel. 699141/2), until April 16.

Arafat, Levy meet in Malta

(Continued from page 1)

health care, education, police and the customs service. "Europe is now without equal," French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said here.

"You won't find any other countries that come up with so much money for you," he told the Euro-Mediterranean conference that comprises the EU nations and Mediterranean neighbours: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Libya, seen in Europe as a sponsor of terrorism, is not taking part.

The conference is primarily a forum for regional trade and political issues but political questions dominated the first day of the meeting.

Mr. Levy said Israel remained committed to peace as evidenced by its handing over in January of the West Bank city of Hebron, home to 400 Jewish settlers and 130,000 Arabs.

For his part, Mr. Arafat said Israel's decision to build in Arab East Jerusalem meant "we have been running around in circles." The Palestinians consider the construction programme undermines

the future status of Jerusalem.

He said Israel undermined the Palestinian economy by preventing construction of a Palestinian airport and harbour and by closing its Gaza Strip and West Bank borders. Syria warned Wednesday that a collapse of the Middle East peace process will scupper attempts to construct long-term economic, political and security ties between Europe and the Mediterranean.

A Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched in 1995 was underpinned by moves towards a lasting Arab-Israeli peace. Foreign Minister Faruq Al Sharaa told the conference.

"It is neither realistic or objective to talk about political or security objectives if we ignore the fate of the peace process, the collapse of which may well lead to the collapse of the Barcelona process," Mr. Sharaa said. The Syrian minister also issued a warning that Israel's current attitude to the peace process could only lead "to an increase in tension and extremism and weaken peaceful inclinations in the region."

The peace process had to be got back on track "before

the region starts witnessing other approaches fraught with danger," he warned.

Instead of continuing the Middle East peace process on the 1991 Madrid conference principle of trading land for peace, Mr. Sharaa said, "Israeli policy has exchanged peace for the expansion and building of settlements." Damascus has stressed its adherence to "land for peace," he said, and wanted "to build on what was already achieved."

Syria insists that it will not resume negotiations with Israel unless it first agrees to return the entire Golan Heights, which the Jewish state captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres broke off talks with Syria in February 1996 to concentrate on May elections in which he was defeated by Benjamin Netanyahu.

Since then, the Israeli government "has rejected the principle of land for peace, backing away from commitments that had been reached," Mr. Sharaa said.

Arab-Israeli ties have deteriorated sharply since Israel began work on a new Jewish settlement Arab East Jerusalem on March 18

Jordan-EU initial partnership

(Continued from page 1)

Locally produced industrial goods which need a transitional period to adapt to the new competition will be subject to gradual exemption of customs duties at a rate of 12.5 per cent annually, starting from the fifth year of the enforcement of the agreement.

In 1977, Jordan and the EU concluded a cooperation agreement under which Jordanian exports were allowed to enter EU markets free of customs duties.

However, because of the restriction of rules of origin and product standards imposed on industrial products by the EU, Jordan's exports to EU markets did not exceed JD 80 million by 1995.

As a consequence of the gradual abolition of customs duty, the volume of EU exports in Jordan is expected to increase. However, European and Jordanian officials believe that Jordan should exert more efforts to increase its exports to the EU.

According to Reuters, Jordan has pledged a

phased liberalisation of government monopolies. The agency quoted officials as saying that although capital movement into Jordan will not be hampered, Amman was able to resist pressure for extra investment guarantees for European firms.

In a statement to Jordan Television, Foreign Minister Fawaz Tarawneh said: "There is a lot of potential that Jordan can make use of. (The agreement) will also be of benefit of both sides mainly in the fields of industry and trade."

With reference to the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), Jordan has been granted a total grace period of seven years to review, rewrite and enforce internationally acceptable IPR laws.

The period is calculated as five years from the time the agreement comes into effect and the two years prior to the agreement implementation.

As for the country's pharmaceutical and chemical sectors, Jordan was only granted a total grace period of five years, two before the agreement and three from

the time the agreement comes into effect.

Jordan seeks to protect its multi-million dinar pharmaceutical industry, which accounted for \$120 million in exports in 1995.

European officials earlier conceded that the implementation of IPR laws are likely to hurt certain sectors of the economy, but said that it would still benefit others.

Jordan and the EU appear to have reached an understanding regarding the issue of third country nationals travelling illegally from Jordan to Europe.

Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Jordan Yves Gazzo earlier told the Jordan Times that each European country will handle this matter separately with Jordan through different bilateral agreements.

The partnership agreement also aims at establishing a number of common principles recognising the respect for fundamental freedoms as well as the establishment of the rule of law, movement toward peace, security, democracy, human rights, and regional

development.

The accord also aims at encouraging exchanges among civil societies in the fields of education, training, youth, culture, media, migrants and health.

The agreement also encourages cooperation in the field of domestic affairs and justice with action against drug trafficking, terrorism and international crime.

In a statement to the press after initialising the agreement, European Commission Vice President Manuel Marin said the accord, which will be of great benefit to Jordan, will strengthen economic relations between Jordan and the EU.

Mr. Marin also praised His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's "important" role in reaching the agreement.

Jordan will be the 5th country to conclude a partnership agreement with the EU after Tunisia, Morocco, Israel and the Palestine National Authority (PNA). Similar agreements are being negotiated with Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria and Syria.

Mecca fire death toll rises to 250

(Continued from page 1)

newspapers or on the country's television Wednesday, with reports centering on efforts by the authorities to ensure the general safety of pilgrims.

Messages of sympathy for the victims of the tragedy

flooded in from around the world, led by Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Pakistan President Farooq Ahmad Leghari who both expressed deep shock and grief.

India's Foreign Minister Inder Kumar Gujral added: "It's a tragedy, it's very very

sad. So many lives have been lost... These were humans. It's not just Indians. There were people from Pakistan and Bangladesh. I share their grief."

His Majesty King Hussein, U.S. President Bill Clinton and United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan have also expressed condolences.

Pakistan produces most of

the 200,000 tents, which each sleep 10 people, that are used every year by pilgrims for the Hajj.

After a fire at the 1995 Hajj that killed three people and injured nearly 100, Saudi authorities ordered travel agencies organising the trips of pilgrims to replace 10 per cent of their old tents with new fire-proof ones each year.

Security clampdown in Kinshasa scuppers opposition demonstration

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zaire's capital Kinshasa was calm Tuesday as an opposition demonstration calling on President Mobutu Sese Seko to quit failed to materialize by mid-day amid discreet but effective security measures.

Civil guards and gendarmes blocked off the two access roads to the campus housing three university-level schools, which seemed enough to stop students rallying.

Elsewhere in Kinshasa, there was a timid resumption of activity as stores re-opened, but traffic was limited after a stay-at-home opposition strike Monday had succeeded in bringing the capital to a standstill.

Escalating political ferment in the capital would create a dangerous second front for Mr. Mobutu, already beset by the rebellion in the east and under growing pressure to either resign or talk to rebel leaders face to face.

The United States urged Mr. Mobutu and rebel leader Laurent Kabila to meet for talks on reaching a ceasefire, while U.N. chief Kofi Annan and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) gave renewed backing to widespread calls for an end to the fighting and the formation of a broad, democratic government.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the talks in South Africa, which broke off at junior level last week, were the best way of avoiding further bloodshed.

Diplomatic sources in Pretoria said Mr. Kabila was due Tuesday in South Africa, although it was unclear who he was going to meet.

Rebels have since October seized the eastern half of Zaire in a drive to unseat Mr. Mobutu, last week claiming Kananga, capital of western Kasai province, and the south-east town of Kolwezi.

Mr. Mobutu's son Mobutu Nzanga said in a newspaper interview published in Brussels Tuesday that Mr. Mobutu would not flee into exile and would stay in Kinshasa to stop the capital falling into rebel hands.

Information Minister Kin Kiey Mulumba had warned late Monday that a state of emergency Mr. Mobutu declared on April 8 would be enforced "in all its rigor, and without waiting."

In Kinshasa there was a normal bustle of people on the streets, especially in the open-air markets. Most people in the city cannot afford to go two days without working.

The opposition loyal to former Premier Etienne Tshisekedi had called for students to demonstrate, using cars as much as possible — taking them from their owners if necessary.

The risk of losing their cars kept many motorists off the streets and there was little traffic.

Over the weekend, the opposition distributed leaflets that said: "Mobutu has betrayed the people. He continues to destroy the country. Let us unite to drive him out."

Gendarmes were posted in small groups at strategic sites across Kinshasa.

An incident in Matete district, a militant Tshisekedi district in eastern Kinshasa, revealed the effectiveness of security forces.

Pro-Tshisekedi protesters had put a barricade blocking the main boulevard in the neighborhood, but gendarmes and civil guards arrived quickly to clear it, and made a few arrests.

It was such quick action which kept demonstrations from growing Monday and seemed to be working Tuesday, in addition to blocking off the campus area.

Pro-Tshisekedi demonstrations last Wednesday were brutally suppressed, the day after the state of emergency was decreed by Mr. Mobutu.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan Monday called on members of the United Nations to press Mr. Kabila into calling a ceasefire and accepting a negotiated solution to Zaire's crisis.

Mr. Annan said in Rome it was clear Zaire was on the brink of major political change and would require the support of the entire international community.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kabila triumphantly entered Zaire's second city Lubumbashi Monday, while security forces loyal to President Mobutu Sese Seko opened fire in Kinshasa to disperse protesters as an opposition stay-at-home strike brought the capital to a standstill.

Supporters of Mr. Kabila danced, cheered and flashed V for victory as Mr. Kabila drove from Lubumbashi airport into the city proper, which was captured by his guerrillas last week after a three-day battle with government forces.

Mineral-rich Shaba province is Mr. Kabila's home region and its population is broadly favourable to the rebel leader. Kabila flew in from Goma, the Zairean town on the border with Rwanda that has been headquarters of his Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire.

Mr. Kabila — wearing his now-familiar cow-boy hat and looking relaxed — made no statement upon arrival, but he expected to speak at a public meeting Tuesday in the city centre, after spending Monday night in a former residence of Mr. Mobutu's in Lubumbashi.

U.K. Conservative leader opposes EU currency

LONDON (R) — Conservative Vice-Chairman Angela Rumbold has dealt a blow to her party's fragile truce over Europe in the run-up to the May 1 election, opposing British participation in a European single currency in direct opposition to the party's "wait and see" policy on the issue.

Ms. Rumbold, a leading member of the party hierarchy, firmly joined party dissidents in her election address to voters, saying of the Euro: "I won't vote for it."

"No to more powers for Brussels. No to a single currency. Yes to a referendum before any further steps of constitutional importance are taken," she said.

Mr. Major, bidding to give the Conservatives their fifth election victory in a row, has opted for a wait-and-see stance, saying he will decide nearer the time if it makes sense to join and

only after he has consulted the British people.

Conservative officials hoped the line would paper over the cracks with Eurosceptics who oppose Britain conceding any more sovereignty to Brussels.

The Labour Party, opinion poll favourites to win power after 18 years in opposition, has mocked Conservative divisions. "John Major is in danger of becoming John minor within his own party," Foreign Affairs spokesman Robin Cook said.

The battle for Britain has turned into a slanging match with political leaders resorting to increasingly bitter personal attacks in the election campaign.

Labour leader Tony Blair, the photogenic centrist dubbed "phoney Tony" by the ruling Conservatives, vowed Sunday to avoid negative campaigning in his bid to end 18 years in opposition for his party.

But he was stung into an angry retort Monday when Mr. Major mocked Mr. Blair's choice of school for his son.

Mr. Major, trailing Mr. Blair by 18 percentage points in the latest poll in the Daily Telegraph Tuesday, said the Labour leader's education manifesto was "a shameful contract with hypocrisy."

Mr. Blair sends one of his sons to a school that has opted out of local authority control — even though Labour was originally opposed to allowing schools to do that.

"What he wants for his own children, he doesn't want for yours. What he has for his children, he wants to take away from yours," Mr. Major said on the campaign trail Monday.

That jibe clearly infuriated Blair, who said of Conservative attacks: "They are negative. They are nasty. They are personalised."

The Conservatives traditionally bill themselves as fervent patriots. But Labour has sought to upstage them with one of the most potent symbols of tenacity — the British bulldog.

For its first television advertisement campaign, Labour hired Fitz the bulldog, who appears tired and listless until he hears the thrumming young Blair talk about how he has transformed Labour, dumping much of its socialist dogma.

Labour campaign manager Peter Mandelson said: "It is an animal with a strong sense of history and tradition. But like Britain today, it is tired and without direction."

The Conservatives mocked Labour's choice of the bulldog, associated with the wartime spirit of resistance embodied by Conservative Winston Churchill. "It ought to be a poodle," one official snorted derisively.

Reno faces U.S. Republican attack after rejecting probe

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno has unleashed a torrent of Republican outrage with her decision to reject an independent probe into alleged improper fund-raising by the Democratic Party and the White House.

In letters to Republicans on the House of Representatives and Senate judiciary committees, Ms. Reno Monday said a special counsel was not justified to investigate possible illegal acts by the vice president or other high-ranking administration officials.

Ms. Reno said a special counsel was not justified to investigate possible illegal acts by the vice president or other high-ranking administration officials.

It was her fourth rejection of Republican calls for an independent inquiry into the matter in five months.

Republicans in Congress responded angrily and some were demanding late Monday that Ms. Reno appear before Congress personally to justify her decision.

President Bill Clinton and Ms. Reno both maintain an independent counsel is unwarranted, even though al-

legations have continued to mount involving the role of the president, Vice-President Al Gore, White House officials and the Democratic National Committee in raising campaign funds.

Senate Republican leader Trent Lott of Mississippi called Ms. Reno's decision "inexcusable."

"There is a clear conflict of interest when the attorney general appointed by the president is called upon to investigate possible illegal acts by the vice president or other high-ranking administration officials," Mr. Lott said.

Republicans have raised concerns about Ms. Reno's failure to discuss personally with Mr. Clinton's national security adviser intelligence received by the FBI that China might try to sway the 1996 U.S. presidential and congressional elections.

Ms. Reno is due to testify Wednesday before the Senate panel about a proposed

constitutional amendment to grant rights to crime victims and their families, and she is likely to be grilled about her decision on the independent probe.

"Ms. Reno continues to be an arm of the president and first lady, rather than an independent law enforcement official of the people," said judicial watch, a Conservative public interest group. "Her actions, and lack of actions, constitute a desecration of the public trust."

Democrats disagreed. "Janet Reno is a professional prosecutor and she isn't going to be pushed around," said Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat. "She has appointed four independent counsels in the Clinton administration already. She's not afraid to do it when the evidence warrants it."

Ms. Reno said the investigation into the fund-raising controversy would continue to be conducted by a justice department task force of career prosecutors and FBI agents.

She said the key requirement under the independent counsel law — specific, credible evidence that a covered person has committed a federal crime — has not been met.

In other developments Monday, the White House said 56 major Democratic party contributors flew on air force one as guests of Mr. Clinton in 1995 and 1996. It said Vice-President Al Gore gave plane rides to 17 contributors in the same period.

And the Democratic Party released some 10,000 pages of internal documents in what appeared to be an effort to advance damage control. The documents described a master plan to raise \$7 million in 1996 campaign funds from Asian-Americans.

"information on a wide range of matters," including items that were previously known only to a "very small group of people."

Mr. McDougal told Mr. Howard he took "full and complete responsibility for my crimes and misdeeds" and said he had "no excuse whatsoever" to offer your honour.

Mr. McDougal has been the central figure of the Whitewater investigation since the start and was closer to Mr. Clinton than anyone else brought to trial.

McDougal jailed for 3 years in Whitewater case

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (R) — President Bill Clinton's former partner James McDougal was sentenced to three years in prison Monday after making a deal Mr. McDougal hinted might spell legal trouble for the president and first lady.

Mr. McDougal, 56, could have received a sentence of more than 80 years in prison for his May 1996 conviction on 18 counts of fraud and conspiracy, but got off lightly because of his cooperation with Whitewater independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr.

Mr. McDougal hinted to reporters afterwards he was giving investigators information that could implicate the president and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in the Whitewater scandal and urged everyone to "stay tuned" to developments.

"I wouldn't go to the bank on that," Mr. McDougal said when asked if he believed the Clintons would be exonerated in the scandal, as he maintained during the May trial.

U.S. District Judge

George Howard recommended that Mr. McDougal serve his time in a prison hospital because of a variety of health problems. He also gave him a three-year probation sentence, with the first year to be served under house arrest, and a \$10,000 fine.

Mr. McDougal was set to go to jail on June 16, but he said he would likely appeal the case.

Mr. Starr argued for a light sentence for Mr. McDougal, whom he said was providing investigators



A military helicopter hovers overhead as thousands of supporters of ousted Indonesian minority party leader Megawati Sukarnoputri staged a protest outside the national parliament in Jakarta Tuesday. The demonstration was a show of strength ahead of the May 29 general elections, from which Megawati has been barred (Reuters photo)

Thousands of pro-Megawati supporters rally at parliament

JAKARTA (AFP) — More than 5,000 supporters of opposition figure Megawati Sukarnoputri rallied Tuesday at the Indonesian parliament demanding to know if her opposition faction will be allowed to stand in next month's general elections.

The demonstrators, most wearing the Indonesian Democracy Party's (PDI) red and black colors and pictures of Ms. Megawati on their shirts, were barred from entering the parliamentary compound by hundreds of riot police on guard at the main gate.

Ten army helicopters hovered over the demonstration, one of the largest in recent times outside the parliament.

The rowdy crowd, yelling pro-Megawati slogans, blocked two of the three traffic lanes in front of the parliament, causing mass traffic jams on the capital's nearby main arteries, correspondents reported.

Other supporters were still arriving in separate groups, the correspondent reported from the scene Tuesday.

There was no report of violence or clashes with the police, who limited themselves to guarding the area and directing the traffic.

Popular Megawati was ousted as PDI leader in June 1996 by a government-backed party faction, who then installed Mr. Suryadi as the new party leader.

Mr. Megawati is the daughter of Indonesia's founding president, Sukarno.

"These people came here to ask MPs about the status of PDI (the Indonesian Democracy Party) in the elections," Ms. Megawati loyalist Tarto Sudiro said.

Mr. Suryadi's leadership has been facing increasing pressure from Ms. Megawati supporters nationwide.

"We want to know whether Ms. Megawati can take part in the elections, we want an explanation," one of the many demonstrators said.

"If Megawati cannot take part, then the election is both democratically and legally flawed," Mr. Sudiro said.

He said the demonstrators, from various towns in Java and Sumatra, were seeking the parliament's help in expressing to the government "the concerns they currently

felt regarding their representatives in the elections."

Ms. Megawati, whose party chairmanship is no longer recognized by the state, has been effectively barred from running in the May 29 elections after the national elections institute refused her faction's list of election candidates.

The institute however, accepted Mr. Suryadi's list which did not contain Ms. Megawati's name or those of her supporters. "We are the victims of July 27 and we will persist in bringing Mr. Suryadi to justice," one of the banners held by the demonstrators showed.

On July 27, supporters of Mr. Suryadi, backed by police and troops, violently took over the PDI headquarters here which was then still in the hands of Ms. Megawati loyalists.

A mass riot ensued later on the same day in central Jakarta that left five people dead and more than 100 injured.

Ms. Megawati and her allies have since filed suits against what they have termed illegal moves to unseat her as the chairman elected by the party's Congress in 1993.

Her supporters in various regions have also filed suits against Mr. Suryadi's supporters for attending a rebel congress held in Medan, north Sumatra in July.

Courts here and in other towns however, have all said they had no jurisdiction to rule on "internal party matters," and have declined to process the suits.

Indonesia will start its 27-day electoral campaign electoral on April 27, ahead of voting on May 29, after a five day "rest period."

The country's three state-recognized parties — the ruling — the Muslim-led United Development Party (PPP) and the PDI — will vie for the 425 elected parliamentary seats.

Another 75 seats will be directly allotted by presidential appointment to members of the armed forces, which under the law do not vote in elections.

Golkar has won every election since 1971, and the vote is taking place amid a backdrop of criticism that is trying influence the outcome.

Serbs in Croatia complete 'fair' vote

ZAGREB (R) — Former rebel Serbs have completed their first election in post-independence Croatia, judged by the United Nations to be fair despite technical hitches that almost ruined it.

Voting in eastern Slavonia, which reverts to Croatian rule this summer after a period under U.N. protection, coincided with Sunday's regional elections across Croatia, but was extended into Monday to make up time for technical delays.

The ruling Nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) cruised to a landslide win in 17 of 21 county assemblies.

It lost only two, while there were stalemates between the HDZ and the opposition in two counties previously run by the HDZ, according to a final unofficial count announced Monday.

Organisational bungling that led to misplaced and insufficient ballot forms halted voting in eastern Slavonia for hours Sunday.

The U.N. blamed the delay on poor planning by Croatian electoral authorities supplying voting materials. Zagreb officials put it down to uncertainty over the number of Serb voters, who were still registering as late as Saturday night.

Franc Vassallo, U.N. election coordinator in eastern Slavonia, said there was still no way to estimate how many people had actually voted. Roughly 150,000 were eligible.

U.N. mission spokesman Philip Arnold said the first unofficial results would be released Tuesday.

"On behalf of (U.N. administrator Jacques) Klein, I can say that he is confident the election will be certified as fair and free," Mr. Arnold told a news conference in Vukovar, eastern Slavonia's largest town, still in ruins from a 1991 war.

Mr. Klein, a U.S. diplomat in charge of the mission, has 30 days to formally certify the voting in which a single Serb party bloc was pitted against the HDZ backed by Croatian refugees who are keen to reclaim their property.

Eastern Slavonia is the one remaining enclave seized by minority Serbs in a 1991 revolt against Croatia's secession from Yugoslavia. Two others were recaptured in war in 1995.

In the capital Zagreb, a centre-left opposition coalition appeared to have edged ahead of the HDZ in a popular vote for the city assembly.

The Social Democrats (SDP) — former Communists — finished with 24.18 per cent and Social Liberals (HSL) 12.58 per cent for a combined 36.76 per cent of the vote, while the HDZ gained 35.67 per cent.

Belgian report calls for police overhaul

BRUSSELS (AFP) — A Belgian parliamentary commission into a series of bungled inquiries into missing children will call for a radical overhaul of the country's police force, the press here reported Tuesday.

The report, which the commission is to present to parliament later Tuesday, is widely expected to blame police and the judicial system for mistakes in the hunt for missing children who died at the hands of paedophiles.

Its findings may lead to senior officials in both bodies being punished.

According to leaked extracts published by the daily *Le Soir*, the report will call for the creation of a two-tier police force organised on local and federal levels.

At present, the police in Belgium has a three-tier structure, comprising the judicial police, the municipal police and the gendarmerie.

Since the discovery in August of bodies at houses owned by convicted child rapist Marc Dutroux, the police have been accused of everything from lack of initiative and administrative bungling to downright incompetence.

The commissioners rule out any notion that the investigative slip-ups were simply "bad luck," *Le Soir* said.

"In different cases, the same situations crop up again, and the same scenarios give rise to the same results," one extract says.

The paper said the report also recommends improved training for examining magistrates who oversee criminal investigations with the aid of police.

A state prosecutor, Benoit Dejean, will be singled out for failing to act quickly enough over the disappearance of a nine-year-old Moroccan girl in 1992.

Her body was found last month, just yards from her home, in the garage of another convicted paedophile, Patrick Derocqhe. He had been interviewed by police, then dropped from enquiries.

"M. Dejean does not fulfil the requirements to direct his team," an extract of the report read on Belgian radio said.

"He trusted his subordinates, but did not sufficiently supervise them," it continued.

After a march in Brussels in October attended by some 325,000 people, Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene acknowledged that the system had failed.

"The institutions, the state, have failed," he said, adding: "We must draw the lessons and punish those responsible."

Mr. Dutroux, who has previous convictions for rape, has been charged with the kidnap and false imprisonment of six girls between June 1995 and August 1996.

He is also accused of the murders of four of them — An Marchal, 17, and Eefje Lambrecks, 19, who were abducted in August 1995, and Julie Lejeune and Melissa Russo, both eight.

The bodies of Lambrecks and Marchal were found a year after they vanished in a property owned by Dutroux. Lejeune and Russo, abducted in December 1995, starved to death three months later.

According to preliminary extracts of the report published in the daily *La Dernière Heure* Monday, police will be also criticised for failing to inform investigators probing the Lejeune and Russo disappearances of suspicions over Dutroux.

The upper echelons of the judicial system are also set for criticism, in particular former Justice Minister Melchior Wathelet who, in 1992 and against expert advice, authorised the early release of Dutroux from a 13-year prison sentence.



Armed Zairean army soldiers sit on top a pick-up truck as they patrol the capital streets. The army sent troops to the streets to prevent students and opponents of President Mobutu Sese Seko's regime from staging protests (Reuter photo)

China rejoices at U.N. rights win, says U.S. double-dealing

BEIJING (R) — Beijing rejoiced Wednesday after sinking a resolution in the United Nations to censure its human rights record and urged the West to draw a lesson from its seventh straight failure to criticize China.

"The Chinese government hereby expresses its admiration and gratitude to all the countries that have upheld justice and rendered support to China," Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said in a statement.

China rallied strong support from Third World countries at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva late Tuesday, decisively sinking a Western resolution criticizing its rights record and treatment of Tibet.

It was the seventh year since 1990 that Western European countries and the United States had failed to achieve even a vote on the issue of China's human rights in the 53-member body despite heavy lobbying.

"We hope the United States, Denmark and a few other countries that have clung to a confrontational approach will draw a lesson from their failure and make a clear break from their erroneous practice of tabling an anti-China draft resolution," Mr. Shen said.

"By tabling an anti-China draft resolution, they have tried to put pressure on China, to interfere in its internal

affairs, undermine its stability and obstruct its development and progress," he said.

He urged dialogue instead of confrontation, and cited enormous progress in human rights in China in recent years.

"China is heartened to note that a considerable number of Western countries have stayed away from co-sponsoring this year's anti-China draft resolution," Mr. Shen said.

The resolution, co-sponsored by Denmark and the United States, failed this year to win the support of several Western countries, notably France, Germany, Canada and Australia.

China has warned that such actions could harm ties, and gave Denmark and the Netherlands a diplomatic slap on the wrist Tuesday by postponing official visits.

In Geneva, delegates from Third World countries at the commission erupted into applause when voting on China's "no action" motion produced a majority of 27 against 17 with nine countries, including Russia, abstaining.

John Shattuck, assistant U.S. Secretary of State, put a brave face on the defeat.

"The most important thing here is not the win-loss vote, but rather the spotlight this commission puts on human rights in countries all over the world," he said.

"At this point it is prema-

ture to say what acts would be appropriate to advance human rights in China, but certainly the issue of human rights in China will remain a major topic of discussion in the commission and outside the commission," he told reporters after a sometimes acrimonious debate.

China's official Xinhua news agency crowed over the victory, accusing the United States and other sponsors of double-dealing and of trying to hold back China's growth.

"What right has the United States, a country with such a bad human rights record, to play the role of 'world human rights judge'?" Xinhua said in a commentary.

"They resorted to double-dealing this time — on one hand, they claimed that they favoured dialogue, but on the other hand, they made confrontations by insisting on a new anti-China resolution," it said.

Despite international concern since Beijing's June 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square, China has emerged without being censured at the main U.N. Human Rights Body. Only in 1995 did it lose a "no-action motion" but narrowly defeated a Western text.

Concern over the world's most populous country has been greater than ever at the U.N. session in Geneva this year, with Hong Kong reverting to Chinese sovereignty on July 1.

Japan fumes at cover-up of nuclear accident

TOKYO (R) — Supporters and opponents of nuclear power were united in anger Wednesday after a state-run firm said it had delayed reporting a new radiation leak after concealing Japan's worst nuclear mishap last month.

The beleaguered Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corp (PNC) was ordered to halt operations at its "Fugen" reactor in western Japan after it emerged that it had waited 30 hours before reporting a radiation leak which occurred Monday.

The PNC, which was already facing possible legal action over its cover-up of key details of an accident last month at a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant northeast of Tokyo, admitted it had erred and publicly apologized. It said it shut down the fugen plant Tuesday night.

"Our report was delayed because of our misjudgment. I am sorry for causing trouble," Norito Take-shita, head of the Fugen plant, told a news conference Tuesday.

A PNC spokesman told Reuters technicians dealing with the leak at the advanced thermal reactor in Tsuruga, Fukui prefecture, "relaxed" instead of reporting the problem.

"The report to authorities was delayed partly because the workers were so relieved once they found the cause of the problem," the spokesman said.

Despite PNC assurances that the radiation leakage was minor and caused no damage, the latest revelation of lax safety awareness did little to assuage critics on both sides of the nuclear power issue in energy import-dependent Japan.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who last week said revelations of PNC's earlier cover-up made him "speechless," told reporters he was "disgusted" at the latest revelation.

"I saw the date of the accident and the date the PNC reported. It's completely hopeless," he told reporters.

Top government spokesman Seiroku Kajiyama told a news conference the troubled state-run body "should be dismantled and start again from scratch, leaving no sanctuaries."

Mr. Kajiyama's comments echoed those of the head of the Citizens Nuclear Information Centre, Japan's largest anti-nuclear organisation.

"Let's say 'sayonara' (goodbye) to the PNC. Now, instead of saying 'clean up your act' we should be telling the firm to 'please go away,'" said nuclear scientist Jinzaburo Takagi, the head of the centre.

Kabila rejects Zaire rebel ceasefire; Kinshasa uneasy

KINSHASA (R) — Zaire rebel leader Laurent Kabila Wednesday spurned calls for a ceasefire and said there would be no let-up in his offensive to remove President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mr. Kabila, head of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), told Reuters by telephone from Zaire's rebel-held second largest city Lubumbashi that the "people are against a ceasefire."

"The people do not want a ceasefire, they want an end to this corrupt regime," said Mr. Kabila, who plans to address his now traditional victory rally in Lubumbashi Thursday.

As rebels target Kinshasa, concern is growing over the prospect of bloodshed and anarchy, diplomats in the sprawling city say.

South Africa Tuesday predicted major progress within days on ending the war to avert mayhem in Kinshasa,

a city of over five million people and the last remaining Mobutu stronghold.

But after two days of anti-Mobutu protests which brought the city to a standstill, many residents are asking what happens if Mr. Kabila's rebels reach town.

"The Americans, the French and other big powers have all made contingency plans to rescue their people, but what happens to the rest of us?" an anxious African diplomat said.

The United States, France, Belgium and Britain have stationed more than 1,000 military personnel in the nearby Congolese capital Brazzaville. The U.S. carrier Nassau is off Zaire's small coastline to the west with additional personnel.

Regular exercises by the Western forces in recent days, including on the River Zaire that separates Brazzaville and Kinshasa, have added to a growing sense of fear in Kinshasa.

"Planes leaving Kinshasa in recent weeks have been packed with dependants of foreigners or well-off Zairians," an airline worker at Kinshasa International Airport told Reuters.

"People don't want to take any chances. The experience in Liberia shows a lot of damage could be done before foreign forces extend their rescue mission to cover non-Westerners," said the African diplomat who asked not to be named.

The United States mounted a military operation to rescue its citizens and other foreigners when militia warfare exploded in the Liberian capital Monrovia in April and May, 1996.

Mr. Kabila's rebels who have seized over half of Zaire since taking up arms to topple Mr. Mobutu in October, formally resumed their whirlwind drive last weekend after a three-day pause to allow Mr. Mobutu time to show a willingness

step down.

Lubumbashi, once a separatist hotbed, welcomed the rebels' arrival last week but some locals bridle at the way they are trying to stamp their authority on the town — describing the dismissal of their pro-autonomy governor as high-handed.

The rebels say they are now 300 kilometres from Kinshasa, a claim ridiculed by the Zaire government and questioned by independent military analysts.

But given the inability of Zaire's undisciplined army to offer resistance to the rebels, many Zaireans doubt government forces will be capable of holding Kinshasa.

Mr. Kabila insists on direct talks with Mr. Mobutu, who has cancer, to negotiate an end to his 32-year rule.

"International efforts will see some dramatic progress within the next few days," Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo told parliament Tuesday, without elaborating.

Report says FBI crime lab erred in major cases

WASHINGTON (R) — The FBI's crime laboratories provided flawed evidence in some major cases, including the Oklahoma City and World Trade Centre bombings, a justice department report said Tuesday.

A scathing report by the department's inspector general after an 18-month investigation recommended the removal of the heads of some laboratories and overhauling their operations. It stopped short of saying anyone should be fired, however.

Forensic work by the Federal Bureau of Investigation is often crucial to federal cases and the errors detailed could provide fodder for defence lawyers in many criminal trials.

The report, however, also slammed the "whistle-blower" who originated the claims of fraud and slanting that sparked the investigation, FBI lab expert Frederic Whitehurst.

"Most of Mr. Whitehurst's allegations were not substantiated," Inspector General Michael Bromwich wrote. "Some important ones were."

Mr. Bromwich, presenting his report at a news conference, added: "The problems and deficiencies that Mr. Whitehurst brought to our

attention are extremely serious. But they are a far cry from the types of rampant and intentional wrongdoing alleged by Dr. Whitehurst ... We did not substantiate the majority of his allegations including his most inflammatory charges of perjury and fabrication of evidence."

Mr. Whitehurst, interviewed by CNN, said he was amazed.

He read from the long list of flaws cited by the report and added, "and yet at the end of this report I find that I have been accused of using poor judgment. That's amazing."

Addressing the flaws his investigation did turn up in FBI crime lab work, Mr. Bromwich said: "Our investigation found deficient work in some high-profile cases and also identified policies and practices in need of substantial change."

He said examples of "serious and significant deficiencies" included "scientifically flawed testimony, inaccurate testimony, testimony beyond the laboratory examiner's expertise, improper preparation of laboratory reports, insufficient documentation of test results, scientifically flawed reports (and) inadequate record management ..."

FBI Deputy Director William E. Spillane told reporters that the agency is seeking an outside scientist to head the laboratory, which now has a staff of about 600 and performs over 600,000 examinations each year in criminal cases.

"The FBI laboratory has done some sensational work for this country over the last 65 years," Mr. Spillane said, pledging that the FBI would carry out the report's recommendations.

FBI officials said several hundred cases are being reviewed for exculpatory evidence that would help defendants win new trials or overturn convictions, but expressed confidence the government would prevail in most of them.

The report said FBI officials involved in the 1995 Oklahoma City case "merit special censure" for evidence provided by explosives expert David Williams.

It accused him of basing his testimony about the size and type of the bomb that destroyed the building on materials a defendant had purchased, not on scientific grounds. The trial in that case has only recently gotten underway in Denver.

The report also found Mr. Williams gave inaccurate testimony on the bomb used

in the 1993 World Trade Centre case "that appeared to be tailored to the most incriminating result."

The two-volume report released by the Justice Department documented similar failings in such other high profile cases as the an Avianca Airlines jet in 1989 which exploded after taking off from Bogotá, killing everyone on board.

The inspector general recommended that the heads of the FBI's explosives and chemical and toxic laboratories should be removed and Mr. Williams should be reassigned.

The inspector general, however, put almost as much emphasis on accusing Mr. Whitehurst of exaggerating his charges.

"Mr. Whitehurst alleged that many employees within the lab repeatedly committed perjury, fabricated evidence, obstructed justice and suppressed exculpatory evidence. Our careful and lengthy review failed to substantiate those charges," he said.

He said the "incendiary way" that Mr. Whitehurst, who was suspended pending the investigation, had criticised fellow workers would make it extremely difficult for him to work effectively in the institution in the future.

Belgian press hails paedophilia report, urges action

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The Belgian press Wednesday praised as "historic" a parliamentary report slamming judicial and police officials for their bungled investigations into missing children, and demanded quick action.

The 17-member commission Tuesday presented a 300-page report sparked by public anger over the handling of the case of Marc Dutroux, a convicted child rapist who was released early from jail and is now accused of a series of brutal child murders.

The report blamed former Justice Minister Melchior Wathelet for Dutroux's provisional release and identified some 30 other individuals it said were responsible for the failure of the investigations.

It also called for a thorough overhaul of the Belgian police system.

In an editorial headlined "The Necessary Signal," the daily Le Soir described the report as "an extraordinary exposure of the whole of our criminal justice system."

"The result is instructive. It provides a remarkably concrete foundation for essential reforms," the paper said.

"A clear signal must be given quickly, showing that this exceptional X-ray of our system of justice has been studied properly and that essential reforms are on their way," it said.

The Libre Belgique newspaper said the commission had "blasted away decades of taboos. ... The event is considerable, to say the



The father and sister of Loubna Benaissa — Lahsen Benaissa (left) and Nabela Benaissa (right) — whose body was found in March 1997, walk out of the Belgian parliament in Brussels after the presentation of the preliminary conclusions of a commission report on malfunctions in the inquiry into missing children. The scandal has shaken Belgium to the core since it broke out eight months ago with the discovery of the bodies of four abducted, abused and assassinated young girls (Reuter photo)

least. It could, if we remain vigilant, constitute more surely than any other political initiative the embryo of a new social culture founded — at last! — on the idea of responsibility."

La Dernière Heure said that Tuesday had been a "historic day" for Belgium. "A page has been turned. Now we must renege — some say rebuild — the judicial system. Only the political authorities can carry out this task properly," it said.

It said that "Belgians of all languages, all social classes and all opinions are now united in their desire to see things concluded."

So that Julie, Melissa, an and Eefje, Loubna and all the other children did not die in vain.

The Flemish newspaper De Standaard said that "the success of the Dutroux commission represents a victory for a new generation of politicians who managed

to listen before taking decisions."

"It is also the victory of the citizen ... who demands that the nation's representatives make the expected efforts and achieve results. For a change, parliament sided with the camp of the citizen."

Finally, the Flemish bet newsblad warned that "politicians should realise now that the people will not allow this report to get lost in petty political games."

On eve of talks, U.S. gives more food to North Korea

WASHINGTON (R) — On the eve of a crucial meeting with North Korea, the United States Tuesday announced \$15 million in additional food aid to feed children in the famine-threatened Stalinist country.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the new donation, which brings total U.S. food aid to Pyongyang to \$33.4 million since late 1995, was offered because the North's food shortages would reach a critical stage this spring.

The new aid comes on top of \$10 million pledged in February that is due to arrive in North Korea in early May.

Mr. Burns said the offer was motivated by humanitarian concerns and was not linked with Wednesday's meeting of U.S., North Korean and South Korean officials in New York.

At that meeting Pyongyang is due to formally announce whether it will accept a U.S.-South Korean proposal for four-party peace talks aimed at replacing the 1950-53 Korean War armistice with a durable peace treaty.

Pyongyang has made clear repeatedly that its food shortage is so dire it could not consider the peace talks until food aid was made available.

U.S. officials are optimistic North Korea will respond positively to the peace talks proposal, which would also include China. They believed a negative reply would not have required Pyongyang to send a delegation to New York for the talks, which could spill over into Friday.

Even if Pyongyang does not agree to enter into peace talks, the food aid would go forward, Mr. Burns told reporters.

The new aid amounts to 50,000 metric tonnes of corn and would help feed 2.4 million children under the age of six. It is expected to take a couple of months to reach North Korea.

"We have information ... Through a variety of means that convinces us that the food

situation in North Korea will reach a critical stage this spring with certain vulnerable groups, especially children, severely at risk," Mr. Burns said.

"We have already heard ... credible reports of death by starvation in the North Korean countryside. And it is our belief that the United States and other countries must respond to this appeal in order to help save those children," he said.

Without further outside assistance, "malnutrition would become more serious and could lead to more civilian deaths by disease and by starvation," he added.

South Korea recently made more food aid available to the North but Japan has held back because of concerns over alleged abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korean agents.

Mr. Burns said such charges are "a very serious matter" but he added: "At the same time, there is a humanitarian crisis under way in North Korea, particularly affecting children, and we — Americans — believe that that's a very important imperative that has to be considered."

The U.S. aid is being given in response to a recent U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) appeal for \$95.5 million for 200,000 tonnes of food. North Korea is believed nearly out of food stocks and the WFP estimates this year's shortfall at upwards of 2.3 million metric tonnes, nearly half of North Korea's food needs.

Mr. Burns said Washington consulted allies South Korea and Japan before making its announcement and believes "this response and the response of our allies and friends around the world will go a long way towards meeting the objectives of the World Food Programme."

The U.S. response alone to the WFP appeal constitutes just under 40 per cent of the tonnage of food commodities required and just over a fourth of the value required.

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Lesson of Mina

THIS YEAR'S 'Eid Al Adha has been marred by the death of at least 250 Muslim pilgrims in a fire that swept through their tent camp in Mina as they were preparing themselves to move to Mount Arafat for the dawn prayer. It appears that the fire broke out due to the explosion of a gas cylinder and spread quickly by strong winds that fanned it to out-of-control proportions. The fire disaster itself suggests that not enough precautions against fire and other hazards have been taken. For one thing, the tents that burnt out were made of inflammable material. Stacked next to one another in a very congested area made the spread of fire that much easier. The uncontrolled use of cooking appliances under such conditions was like flirting with death.

Repeated occurrences of health hazards during Hajj in one form or another calls for improved Hajj conditions including proper housing, hygiene and safe passage and movement. The government of Saudi Arabia has done a great deal already to ameliorate the conditions under which millions of Muslim pilgrims gather every year but it appears that these efforts are not enough. Overcrowding has always been a daunting experience for the Saudi authorities and maintaining law and order has been therefore taxing to them to say the least. It is estimated that the Saudi government has mobilised about 150,000 security forces, guides and scouts to assist in making the stay of the pilgrims safe and enjoyable.

Cutting down on the number of Muslim pilgrims is not the best answer given the large number of faithfuls wanting to perform one of the five pillars of Islam. But it could be entertained, especially for the thousands of repenters from East Asian countries and Saudi Arabians themselves, along with the other ways can be considered to improve the Hajj conditions.

Admittedly it is a formidable task to accommodate millions of people who arrive for the holy occasion. Providing for the near two millions who descend on Mecca and Medina every year is like constructing a whole new city for millions of people literally over night. Makeshift housing has therefore become necessary since no government can afford the construction of permanent housing for millions of people that would be occupied for only a week every year.

Yet more efforts need to be undertaken to avoid unsafe congestions even if it entails greater hardships on the pilgrims. Applying stricter rules on the use of appliances may have to be introduced. Use of inflammable materials for the temporary housing of pilgrims must also be strictly regulated. There is indeed scope and space to do what could and should be done to make the gathering of so many people safer. Saudi Arabia has gone a long way to meet that goal. Finishing the job is what is now required.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i said Wednesday that since Israel is going ahead with plans to build a Jewish settlement on Arab East Jerusalem and is disregarding calls for complying with the requirements for peace on all the Israeli-Arab tracks, a collective action should be taken to deal with the situation. Subhi Fahmawi suggested that Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians create a common bureau that would take care of the collective negotiations with Israel, with its decisions to be binding on the five Arab parties. The writer said it is true that the Arabs seek peace, but the Israelis seek to hold talks with individual Arab countries to try to secure the maximum benefit for the Jewish state at the expense of the weak and disunited Arab states. Whether under the Likud or Labour governments, Israel's policies are unchanged and, he said, they are designed to perpetuate occupation and induce normalisation of relations with the Arabs to benefit from trade with their countries. By gathering the five Arab parties together, the Arab side will act in concert and from a position of strength that will ensure a just settlement.

A WRITER for the weekly Al Majd launched a scathing attack on Tunisia for its failure to join the other Arab states in a collective boycott of Israel in light of its current practices in Palestine and Jerusalem. Fahed Rimawi, who is also the weekly's editor, said that it was Tunisia that hosted the Arab League headquarters when Egypt concluded a separate treaty with Israel and it was Tunisia that hosted the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) when it was evicted from Lebanon. But it is strange to see Tunisia not following the example of Oman and Qatar and refusing to stop the process of normalisation with the Jewish state, in implementation of an Arab League decision designed to deter the Israelis from further pursuing their plots in Palestine, continued the writer. We are not demanding that Tunisia declare war on Israel, but we are asking that Tunisia comply with the collective Arab countries' decisions concerning the central Arab issue: Palestine. He added. It is true that Arab countries maintain contacts with Washington and Tel Aviv, both of which seek to keep the Arabs divided and weak, but we are certain that those countries realise that the masses think differently and harbour other views and are oriented against the U.S.-Israeli aggression against the Arab lands.

View from Academia

On swear words and subcultures

THERE IS a joke — widespread in eastern, southern, and northern Amman, circulated partly to kill time, partly to ease frustration with life's unpleasant surprises and disappointments, partly to be cute and partly out of jealousy — about the way children and adolescents who live in Western Amman (i.e. in the more "privileged" and "luckier" areas of the capital) swear at each other in moments of anger. The joke says that when a western-Amman child/adolescent is really (I mean really) provoked by one of his peers, he bursts out: May your video-player break down. Or: May you find no chocolate in the supermarket. Or: May your Sri Lankan maid go home.

There is no equivalent joke in eastern, southern or northern Amman. Most children from these areas, when they are provoked (and they seem to always be provoked) wrestle each other to the ground, bite each other in a variety of bodily spots, curse each other's fathers, mothers or (especially) sisters (once in a while grandmothers are included in their very embarrassing phrases), spit at each other, and so on. Not all of them, of course. There are those poor, helpless kids who confine themselves to the simple: I forgive you.

The other day, my 6-year-old son who goes to a private school in Western Amman (luckier than his father) was trying to persuade his aunt, who lives in Eastern Amman and who has spent her ten-year teaching career in some remote areas of the Kingdom and in Eastern Amman, to come to visit. She (being a generally unsympathetic, I-am-not-really-sure, I-do-not-really-know, maybe person) declined the offer. My son got angry after several failed persistent attempts at persuading her, in which he used the sweetest words he could muster and the most enticing

logic he could think of. After he got fed up trying, and thinking he was really giving it to her this time, he said angrily: I am not going to invite you to my birthday party next year (he having had her over for his birthday party a couple of weeks earlier). I could hear her loud giggle over the phone. A week later she told me she kept laughing for days. "Is this how your son swears? Is this the best he could do? You must do something about it. Let him spend more time in Eastern Amman".

God knows what the shape of our society (and of its cultures and subcultures) will be in the years to come, as the gap between West and East widens or narrows.

When I (an overall product of the Jerusalem countryside, Eastern Amman, upstate New York, Irbid and North-Western Amman) swear, and I do not swear unless I am really provoked (and I seem to be provoked quite often these days), when I am really angry with a person (say a colleague at work who oversteps his limits and surprises me with a totally uncalled for remark said in jest but meant seriously; a motorist who wants to race me at the most uncalled for moments; a student who refuses to come to class prepared and take active part in class discussions despite all of my sincere and ingenious attempts, endeavors, tactics and strategies; a greengrocer who hides the best tomatoes and apples in the room at the back, etc.), I burst saying: May you file an application at one of our public institutions and have to follow it up yourself. May you have to try to explain to a civil servant a simple matter. May you find it urgent to call a public institution and get an answer. May you attempt to find what happened to an application you filed at one of our public institutions a week, month or year earlier. May you expect your students

to come to class prepared. May you try to catch a taxi in Amman during the summer time. May you stop at a traffic light during the rush hour or at two in the dead of the night. May you attend a staff meeting at one of our institutions. May you be appointed to a co-ordinating committee in the Arab World. May you come to a border with an Arab country. May your car gas run short and try to find a gas station. May you want to watch something interesting on TV Thursday night and find Taratata. May you go on a picnic to the Jordan Valley on Friday and attempt to find a spot. May you attempt to sit on the ground in our picnic areas. May you have the courage to use a bathroom at one of our public institutions (or some restaurants). May you apply for a phone line. May you rent or build a house at the end of a slope, next to a manhole. May you need water in Amman in the summer time. May you send your car to a mechanic. May you bring an expert to take a virus out of your computer. May you send your camera to the local agent to fix. May you have to listen to a lecturer at one of our public lectures. May you go to our movie theatres and want to concentrate on the film. May you expect a house loan from one of our institutions. May you attempt to walk on our sidewalks or among a crowd. May you go to a restaurant with a 2-year-old child. May you go to the mosque on Friday and expect to hear something new. May you ask for your receipt when you finish your meal at our restaurants. May you attempt to reserve a room in a hotel in Aqaba.

Do you want more? Well, you must have experienced enough trauma already this first day of the Eid.

U.S. losing will and power to control Israel

By G.H. Jansen

THE MEETING, on April 7, between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington was a truly momentous event in modern Middle East history because during this encounter a new pattern of power was revealed between the states exercising power in the area.

This pattern has, of course, developed and emerged over decades, but the Netanyahu-Clinton encounter marked the culmination of this evolution. Netanyahu was in Washington not as an official guest, at the invitation of the president, but as a reluctant participant in this "working" summit who had to be ordered, commanded to be present. Netanyahu, as prime minister of a state that is deeply dependent on the U.S., politically, financially, diplomatically, could not dare refuse such summons. But he went to Washington most reluctantly because Clinton and his administration had let it be known that the U.S. did not approve of Netanyahu's decision to begin construction work on a large new

Jewish settlement on the hill called Jabal Abu Ghneim by the Palestinians and Har Homa by the Jews, located between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

To be obliged to obey a public summons from Washington was very humiliating for a prime minister of Israel and, particularly, Netanyahu, who is a brash and arrogant individual. Therefore, when Clinton requested Netanyahu to cancel or defer the building on Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa, the prime minister had his revenge. He, quite simply, said "no," to the president. "The work will go ahead whatever happens," Netanyahu stated.

It was this act of defiance that showed that the new pattern of power had been confirmed. This recalls the plot of the novel, "Frankenstein," written by Mary Shelley, the wife of the English poet. In this book, a crazy scientist of that name invents a creature which escapes his inventor's control and becomes a destructive monster.

Thus, for the past half century, the U.S. played the part of doctor Frankenstein, bringing into existence and building up a politico-mili-

tary entity, Israel. As Israel derived power from its linkage with the U.S., the U.S. exercised power in the region through its connection with Israel which became the local superpower, thanks to the U.S. Thus, power has passed back and forth between the creator and the created.

However, the U.S. has conceded every wish of its creature so that this state is now strong enough and bloody minded enough to defy its creator. And to do so publicly.

To have a strong and rapacious creature "on the loose" in the region and beyond any control is frightening not just for the creature's opponents, that is the Arabs, but for all the peoples in its west Asian neighbourhood. And disturbing for the U.S. which now finds Israel harming American interests in the area.

This has happened because Israel has developed its own independent source of support and strength within the U.S. — the Zionist lobby, led by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) which can and does bypass the White House and State

Department to go to Congress whenever the president and his officials oppose Israel's wishes. Netanyahu is in a particularly advantageous position with regard to Congress because he enjoys the support of the Republican right, including the powerful head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Jesse Helms.

American recognition of its impotence on the regional scene was promptly displayed after the meeting between Clinton and Netanyahu. His defiant stand forced Washington to draw back from the regional peace process, saying that the parties directly concerned must solve their own problems. Furthermore, Washington (at Netanyahu's insistence) has excluded direct European intervention.

Clinton's decision to dispatch the State Department envoy, Dennis Ross, to the area once again this week is the very least the president could do and is unlikely to produce a positive result. The Palestinians distrust Ross because during previous negotiations he has adopted Israel's positions and Ross is too low level to

compel Netanyahu to make the kind of concessions which would bring the Palestinians back to the table.

If Clinton had decided to take an independent stand which might have produced a resumption of negotiations, he would have sent his secretary of state, the plain speaking Madeleine Albright who has frankly expressed U.S. opposition not only to the new Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement but also to all Israeli settlement activity on all occupied Palestinian land.

For the U.S. to stand on the sidelines is completely disingenuous and dishonest. If Israel and the Palestine Authority are left face to face with each other on their own, there are two possible outcomes: deadlock, as at present, because the Palestinians are not in a position to compromise, or Israel will get its way because of its overwhelming political, military, economic power, in large part borrowed from the U.S.

The new factor is that Israel has now turned this borrowed strength against the U.S., the sole remaining superpower, itself.

In international affairs it is not all that unusual for a

client state to turn against its sponsor, as President Syngman Rhee did against the U.S. in the later stages of the Korean war.

There is only one circumstance that could deter the U.S. from washing its hands of responsibility for turning loose on the region this out-of-control settler state. If the U.S. is not active on the west Asian diplomatic scene — as the creator and erstwhile controller of the Jewish state — that withdrawal would lead to a great diminution of American power and influence in the Middle East, of great importance because of its oil, and the world at large.

For years the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians, acted in the belief — a self-delusion as it happened — that they could get Israel to behave reasonably and peaceably if they were able to get the U.S. on their side and then persuade the U.S. to impose an acceptable settlement by exerting pressure on Israel.

The Arabs have had, first, to discover that the pro-Zionist U.S., especially so under Clinton, did not want to use pressure. And, second, the Arabs are now learning that the U.S. is not able to pressure Israel.

LETTERS

The will to do things

To the Editor:

MR. NETANYAHU'S obsession with "security and terrorism" has become a myth that is making fewer and fewer people, even among his own faith, believe in.

Perhaps it may be worthwhile reminding Mr. Netanyahu of what the late Churchill told Hitler in the early days of World War II: "You can cheat all the people all the time, but you cannot cheat all the people all the time".

According to the U.N. Charter and all U.N. Security Council resolutions, which, inter alia, say that "acquisition of land by force is not permissible", the eastern part of Jerusalem is still considered occupied territory. So do the Oslo accords as well, since the two conflicting parties who signed them left the solution of the Jerusalem problem to the final stage of negotiations. A former U.S. representative to the U.N., known to be a staunch supporter of Israel, announced more than once that the U.S. government does not recognise the annexation of East Jerusalem to Israel, and that it considers it as occupied territory, like the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and, as such, the question of Jerusalem should be resolved by negotiations.

Demonstrating their established policy of considering East Jerusalem as occupied territory, all the successive U.S. governments declined to yield to the pressure of Israel and the Congress to transfer the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

It is, therefore, surprising to see that successive American governments, instead of making the policy on Jerusalem clear to Israel, kept on pumping more and more money and arms into the Jewish state, a fact that encouraged it to ignore all U.N. Security Council resolutions and to persist in violating the U.N. Charter and international laws and regulations.

Israel is also ignoring the will of the whole wide world, depending in that solely and wholly on the American blind and limitless support and its vetoes at the Security Council.

It is thus clear that the onus of responsibility for the present impasse in the peace process does not rest entirely with Israel. The U.S. government, which is the main sponsor of the peace process, has a big share of responsibility and is, therefore, duty bound to exert all efforts to put an end to the Israeli violations and intransigent policy, which are the cause of all the troubles in the area.

Needless to say that the U.S. government will have the full support of the EU, Russia, the Non-Aligned Movement and even its own Congress, if properly briefed, for its

efforts to rectify the situation.

The question remains: Does the U.S. government have the will to do anything? It remains to be seen.

Basil Ennab,
Amman.

Who runs U.S. policy?

To the Editor:

I HAVE never seen myself as anti-American. I have always had a positive attitude towards Americans as individuals; I am therefore not influenced by any paranoia against everything that is American, nor will I allow myself to make sweeping accusations against U.S. actions, as some people are in the habit of doing. That, nevertheless, will not deter me from pointing an accusing finger at the U.S. where that is due.

What the U.S. calls its "foreign policy" in the Middle-East i.e., primarily vis-a-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict, the attitude of successive U.S. administrations, cannot but be exposed and condemned. The latest double-veto to block condemnation of Israeli settlement expansion to smother Jerusalem is but a recent manifestation of the ill-logic of the U.S. stance regarding the conflict.

Why does the conflict of every nation in the world fall under the jurisdiction of the U.N., with enthusiastic U.S. support, except for Israel's clear defiance of U.N. Security Council resolutions, which is not dealt with by the world body?

A case in point is the recent double veto, in which the U.S. stood against 14, out of 15, Security Council members and 130 nation members of the General Assembly, in effect a clear defiance of the U.S. itself of the world community, many U.S. allies. Obviously all these nations cannot be wrong.

U.S. allows itself to be the odd-man out when it serves its internal partisan politics — this does not leave it much credibility and exposes it as being very subjective when, on other issues, it lectures nations on issues of principle.

The only superpower, the great American nation, is in the weird position of being in effect dictated to by a small minority, indeed an unenviable position.

The U.S. body politic is so infested with panderers to Israel that American politicians who have no outright allegiance to the Zionist cause have to sell their conscience to get the Jewish vote, no matter what injustice that may eventually cause nations and peoples thousands of miles away. This has been going on for decades in the American politi-

cal exercise, as a matter of fact as far back as the Harry Truman administration which recognised Israel as a state; ever since then, successive U.S. administrations have not been motivated by principles of law of justice but essentially by political opportunism. This is usually manifest at the highest levels; to cite but a few: President Bush, when approaching the presidential elections running against then presidential candidate Bill Clinton, immediately released the \$10 billion loan guarantee to Israel, which he had frozen until then. For that matter, he also imposed the no-fly zone below the 32nd parallel in southern Iraq. Both moves were pure vote-catching ploys in internal U.S. partisan politics, but Bill Clinton's stronger Jewish credentials won the day. I remember presidential candidate Bill Clinton standing in front of the cameras and declaring that Israel would not regret it if he won the presidency. Can anyone imagine why out of more than 180 nations of the world, tiny Israel would be singled out for such VIP treatment in an American presidential campaign?

A later motion, advanced by Senate majority leader Bob Dole, to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (a violation of international law and also a very vulgar example of this opportunism and open pandering to Israel and the Jewish lobby inside the U.S.) did not get Bob Dole in the White House but certainly disgraced him in the eyes of many Middle East political observers.

When the peace process was first initiated in Madrid in 1991, I, and I believe many like me, felt relieved that peace (hopefully with justice) was at last breaking out to somehow erase the injustice that had been caused to the Palestinian people by returning to them what was left of their original homeland, and that occupation of Syrian and Lebanese territories would be terminated, hopefully establishing the much needed stability in the area.

Regrettably, the delay tactics of the Rabin-Peres administration eventually played into the hands of extremists on both sides — hence the sorry state of the peace process, with obvious U.S. incapacity to have any real influence to stop Netanyahu and his fascist clique from resuming their conspiracy to gobble up Jerusalem and go against the Oslo agreements, escalating the strife in the process.

The U.S. foreign policy in this area should be run by the U.S. State Department and not by the AIPAC, the world Jewish Congress and the rest of the Jewish lobby. Until then, what the U.S. chooses to call its foreign policy in the Middle East is no more than a knee-jerk reaction to the progress of the omnipresent Jewish lobby on the U.S. political scene.

Omar Abbass,
Amman.

Society on the Move

Movers and shakers make names for themselves

Although it may have been a quiet pre-Eid week for almost everyone else in the country, one important person was rather mobile. HRH Crown Prince Hassan had people at attention with visits near and far to various institutions and a multitude of meetings, most of which we reported on. At nearly all of these exchanges the Crown Prince's words were focused on two major themes. One was the role of civil society in interacting with other institutions in the country for the common goals of maximum utilisation of the Kingdom's resources. Prince Hassan accentuated the value of such interaction on the national level as well as on the international level, driving home the point that continuous exchanges of this sort work to benefit economic, trade and cultural development. He turned to the practice of patronage of activities and said that the concept of being a patron requires that that person be active in the endeavour at hand, work with those involved and thus translate patronage into actual help and participation. The second theme was the need to disseminate information, share experiences and work together for common goals. This policy creates awareness, he said. During his visit to the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) on the occasion of its 27th anniversary, he said it is important for such an institution to create awareness of what its scientists are doing so that other institutions, public or private, can glean advantages from that work and thus progress. The Crown Prince suggested that mission statements be drafted in concert with all concerned organisations and parties to explain just what it is a particular institution's objectives, goals, and activities are. By involving others, he said, comprehensiveness of the mission is achieved, and within that comprehensive statement, the institution is guaranteed acceptance by the parties in question as all will have had some input in the final decision. Prince Hassan also met with a visiting team from a French publishing house which is keen to publish the Crown Prince's latest book on Christianity in the Arab World. During the meeting the publishers also interviewed Prince Hassan on his views on the same subject and his own mission to encourage inter-faith scholarship and dialogue. And today, deputising for His Majesty King Hussein who is convalescing from surgery, Prince Hassan will greet citizens at the Royal Court on the occasion of Eid Al Adha. People were asking, "Where does he get his stamina?"

A WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE: Last weekend in the United States, audiologist Manal Hamzeh received an award for her efforts to improve the lives of the Deaf in Jordan. At a ceremony held at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., Ms. Hamzeh was given the Alice Cogswell Award for valuable service on behalf of Deaf people. The 1997 award was presented by the Laurent Clerc Cultural Fund for the Cultural Advancement of the Deaf Community of the Gallaudet University Alumni Association. Ms. Hamzeh is the first Jordanian to have received the award. Five other awards were also given at the ceremony to individuals who have done similar service in the field. It was in 1864 that Abraham Lincoln granted a federal permit to establish Gallaudet in Washington, D.C. It is the first and only university exclusively for Deaf people in the world. According to Ms. Hamzeh, "Jordan is capable of reaching a level where Jordanians can be accepted into the Harvard for the Deaf." Currently, one Jordanian Deaf student, Maher Abu Khader, is enrolled at Gallaudet University. "We would like to have more Jordanians at Gallaudet, and it would help if Gallaudet University realises that we do have capable Deaf students in Jordan," Ms. Hamzeh's next goal is to establish a chair or scholarship at Gallaudet University for Jordanian students. In accepting the award, Ms. Hamzeh paid tribute to those without whom, she said, her work on behalf of the Deaf in Jordan would not have been possible. "Now, with this honour, I believe and feel that the barriers are manageable challenges to achieve more for and with the Deaf in Jordan." Ms. Hamzeh signed in her native Arabic/Jordanian Sign Language. Ms. Hamzeh received her graduate degree in audiology at Gallaudet University in 1986. She founded and is currently the director of the Specialised Audiology Centre in Amman, where she continues to provide advice on audiological and speech-language programmes throughout the Kingdom and neighbouring countries. She also established the first Speech and Hearing Department in Jordan's Ministry of Health, the National Centre for Psychological and Educational Consultation, and the Communication



Manal Hamzeh



HRH Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday gets down to business with faculty and staff of AL al Bayt University in Mafraq (photo by Boghos)

Disorders Training and Service Project for the Society for the Care of the Handicapped in the Gaza Strip in conjunction with the University of Lamar, Texas. In addition, Ms. Hamzeh initiated the implementation of the first weekly TV news programme interpreted for the Deaf in Arabic Sign Language. In her acceptance speech, she credited Jordan Television for introducing Jordanian Sign Language interpretation of the news for the Deaf. Ms. Hamzeh also coordinated the development, publication and dissemination of the Jordanian Sign Language Book, the first of its kind in the Arab World. Hats off to Manal, N.B. The "politically correct" reference to the hearing impaired is Deaf, with a capital 'D', as is the reference to Sign Language.

AN ACCUSTOMED FEAST: Swedish Ambassador Agneta Bohman says she traditionally welcomes in the spring with a lunch for associates and friends. And that festive event will not be spoiled by the uprooting of streets in her Third Circle neighbourhood, says the ambassador. She sent all her guests detailed instructions on how to approach her residence via the detours imposed by the Amman Municipality while construction of a major tunnel roars full-speed ahead. The note also contains tips on where it would be safest to park, and how to step carefully, with the assistance of a police officer, over the rubble leading to her entrance gate. Concentration, balance, persistence and a sense of humour will get you there.

WEDNESDAY WELCOMES: Two diplomatic social events of different proportions are scheduled for Wednesday, April 29. First, and reportedly more intimate, will be a reception to welcome new Spanish Ambassador to Jordan Eudaldo (Lalo) Mirapex and his wife Benima. The event will be hosted by Deputy Head of the Embassy Francisco Aguilera and his wife Gemma, and invitees are officials from the embassy, the Instituto Cervantes and a handful of Jordanian officials and friends of the embassy.

On a much larger scale, which may yet top last year's soiree, the Freedom Day celebration hosted by South African Ambassador Henry De Bruyn and his wife Sophia, is fast becoming the event to be invited to. Those who were there last year can attest to the fresh, generous and warm hospitality of their South African hosts. Expected back again will be chef Evan Corbett who will be orchestrating another South African culinary experiences full of delightful surprises. And for entertainment the embassy has arranged to bring South Africa's "foremost creative musician" Abdullah Ibrahim to Amman. Mr. Ibrahim, (a.k.a. Dollar Brand before his 1968 conversion to Islam) has

worked with some of jazz's greatest, John Coltrane, Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman and Sunny Murray. His rise in his career was accompanied by his struggle to see apartheid ended in his homeland, and for that he spent many years in exile. Today he holds two honorary doctorate of music degrees from the University of the Western Cape and from the University of Cape Town.

FOR THE LOVE OF EARTH: The American Center of the U.S. embassy is celebrating Earth Day 1997 with a seminar, exhibits, displays and an award ceremony on Tuesday, April 29. The seminar will be presented in English by three panellists: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Development Affairs Dr. Jawad Anani, Dr. Safel El-Deen Hamed of the World Bank, who is currently working as an environmental planning consultant in North America and the Middle East, and architect Ramzi Qawar, owner and director of the Development Community Group. The panellists will address issues of public participation in sustainable development, as well as the business and environmental requirements for sustainable development. The American Center in cooperation with the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, Al Dustour Arabic daily, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and the Jordan Environment Society sponsored a drawing competition under the title "Jordan: Sky, Earth and Water" for Jordanian children. The three prize-winning drawings will be reproduced as Jordanian postage stamps in 1998. All children's drawing will be exhibited at the American Center from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. Displays include a stamps exhibit on the environment by the ministry, promotional literature on the environment, water conservation, nature reserves, video showings, and slide presentations. The award ceremony for the winning drawings will be held at 5:00 P.M., followed by an informal reception. In keeping with the theme of Earth Day, the American Center's notice was printed on recycled paper, but the light green print was somewhat difficult to read.

ART NEAR AND FAR: Another sort of exhibition will take place at a new art gallery in Amsterdam. The opening of Galerie Fi Beiti this Saturday will feature the work of Jordanian painter Jamal Khamis. Gallery Manager Nico Duyvesteyn says Fi Beiti aims at a disciplinary approach and appreciation of art forms which refer to a foreign origin and thus will present the work of professional artists whose origins are in and around the Middle East, but who live and work in the Netherlands. It will also help to promote these artists and advance their development as profes-

sionals, he says. The gallery, at Prinsengracht 157, will be inaugurated by Jordanian Ambassador to the Benelux Omayya Toukan.



P. V. Vivekanand (Anand) in his domain

TIL OUR PATHS MEET AGAIN: We say a very fond farewell to one of our prized senior colleagues P.V. Vivekanand who is making a professional move that takes him back to his home in India. Vivekanand, known to everyone as Anand, has been our top page editor (i.e., front page, pages 2 and 12), chief sub-editor, reporter and mentor for 17 years. His wealth of knowledge and experience on Jordan are immeasurable, and every other editor, reporter, proof-reader will sorely miss his selfless team spirit in responding to our every nagging question on dates, names and events, let alone the wit with which he answered us. He has several attractive offers awaiting him, and it will only be a matter of time before he decides. At a small farewell gathering Al Ra'i and Jordan Times Chairman Mahmoud Al Kayed said Anand was one of the family and it will be difficult to see him leave but he understands anyone's desire to finally settle at home or closer to it. The J.T. crowd will also miss Anand's son Anoop (11) and daughter Vismay (5) who were constant delights and refreshing spirits that brightened up our offices whenever they stopped by to pick up their dad. Taking on Anand's awesome responsibilities at the J.T. is Ramzi Khoury, a professional journalist with long experience in the world of media. To Ramzi, we say welcome to the family and we are here to help. To Anand, his wife Chitra, and the children, all God's blessings.

A Happy Eid to all!

Jennifer Hamarneh

Written from a life

What does it all mean? Naguib Mahfouz has an old man's answer

Echoes Of An Autobiography
By Naguib Mahfouz
translated by Denys Johnson-Davies
126pp, Doubleday, £14.99

THERE ARE cities which listen to and follow more stories than others. Barcelona, for instance, in comparison with Madrid. Berlin has more stories than Vienna today. Glasgow more than London. For me Cairo is a city with stories that never stop. Yet I've never been there, so if I believe this, it is thanks to the life-work of Naguib Mahfouz. In this book of 120 pages there are about 200 stories.

Let's say it first in order to put it behind us: This book has been appallingly translated. The translator may know Egypt well enough, but he has forgotten — or never known — the language into which he is translating. So the top-writing is slack, lame and falsely pious, whilst the under-writing is tense, witty and sceptical. But the marvellous quality of the book nevertheless survives.

Mahfouz was not interested in writing an autobiography. First because, as he sees it, this "autobiography" has been lived and doesn't need writing, and second because stories

for him are essentially encounters which have been edited by life, not by the writer.

This is why he calls the book "Echoes..." It is a collection of voices, each suggesting a story, reverberating from the last 60 years. The author was born in 1911. Mercifully there is no reconstruction, only a beautiful sense of timing. Mahfouz has written 25 film scripts and this is not surprising; his sense of timing depends upon cuts.

The story-telling itself is fabulist, the narrative mode of an old man: "I saw an enormous person with a stomach as large as the ocean, and a mouth that could swallow an elephant. I asked him in amazement, 'Who are you, sir?' He answered with surprise, 'I am forgetfulness. How could you have forgotten me?' "And it is also very Sufist: "People came to me and said that they had decided to stand still until they discovered the meaning of life. I said to them, 'Move about without delay, for the meaning is concealed in movement.'"

These two viewpoints, when combined together, produce something which Nadine Gordimer — a fellow Nobel Prize winner — calls in her foreword "wisdom." Yes. Though I don't think she likes the word any more than I do. Maybe

Mahfouz is wise, but, first, he is subversive.

Take the story called The Cross-Roads, about a small boy. An aunt lived in their house. Often the aunt's son, the Bey (local governor), came to visit her. He came lightly and with grace. The house was happy. Once a week on Fridays another man also came to visit the aunt. He was down-at-heel and difficult, and the house was ill at ease. Yet the boy noticed that this man's features were like those of the Bey. Is he the Bey's brother? He asked his mother.

"Yes," she answered clearly, "and give him as much respect as you give to the Bey." He came to arouse in me even more curiosity than the Bey himself."

This anecdote pivots on something it doesn't describe: The turning point, years back, when the two brothers took different paths. And here one is close to the cunning of Sufist narration, the purpose of which is to remind the listener that every moment taken for granted was possibly a turning point.

If one thinks of life as a book, the Sufist narrator surreptitiously turns the page to look ahead. With Mahfouz this happens so swiftly we can read almost nothing on the next page. We simply discover that it has already been written,

and perhaps we register a single mysterious word. This, however, is enough to remind us that the page we are r... living is not what we think it is. As one of these pieces puts, "I came across a dry rose, its petals scattered, behind a row of books as I was tidying up my library. I smiled. The depths of the remote past gave way to a fleeting light."

These stories give pause because of their precision: Their precision to life as seen by an old man. Nothing to do with precise information — there is absolutely no information, in the current sense of the term, in the entire book. Mahfouz's precision is that which is necessary for trying to touch what he loves: "The beautiful, attractive woman passed by me, sighing and with swaying gait, and I paid her no attention. In that dry time I took pleasure in the gratification of the pride of abstinence and of shunning worldly temptations. On a radiantly moonlit night I rushed at a bound to my true nature and sped after this beautiful, attractive woman, apprehensive of being rebuked for having shunned her, but she received me with a smile and said, 'Be happy in your fate, for I accept repentance' "— The Guardian.

John Berger

BOOK REVIEW

Say Cheese

By Jean-Claude Elias

EARLY LAST year I talked about digital still cameras. These devices look and work like a standard 35 SLR (single lens reflex) camera but use no film. Instead they digitise the pictures you take and store them on a disk or in memory chips for further processing and printing using a computer. Several models have appeared in the past few years but none had really "taken off" so far, for various reasons. The models I was referring to used to cost \$5,000 to 12,000, far beyond the reach of amateurs.

To become popular a digital camera must satisfy three essential requirements: One, it must be practical, friendly to use; two, it should produce pictures with an acceptable quality; three, it shouldn't cost an arm and a leg. Until now most models that were launched since 1990 would more or less comply with only one or two of the above criteria. Recently however five manufacturers (Epson, Nikon, Fuji, Kodak and Ricoh), almost simultaneously, have launched each other own model that is extremely easy to operate, gives good though not excellent results, and cost \$300 approximately, in the U.S.A. In Jordan where photographic equipment is highly taxed such cameras are now sold at around JD700.

The beauty of these new machines is in the simplicity of their operation. Point and shoot like with a traditional camera, then with the supplied cable, connect to a PC or a Macintosh computer and transfer the images you have taken. It's fast and it works. Once you've downloaded them inside the computer, you can see the photographs on the screen, crop them, adjust the contrast, the colours, and perform any manipulation you can dream of. You can integrate them with other programmes, use them like backgrounds or screen savers in Windows, E-mail them to your cousin in South America, print them on your ink-jet colour printer, and so forth. Any frame that is not kept can be deleted with the same ease as you delete a file from the computer's hard disk. Naturally, the memory of the camera can also be erased anytime, frame by frame or entirely. Depending on the model and the memory options you choose you can store anything from 30 to 200 photographs at one time in the camera.

chip talk



With software like Adobe Photoshop for instance the transformations, adjustments and modifications you can bring to digitally captured pictures is only limited by your imagination. What was highly sophisticated and very expensive just a few years ago has become affordable and commercially available.

The quality of the obtained images is a little above average. One cannot exactly compare such photographs with what a Canon, Nikon or Pentax SLR would produce. To get that you still have to jump above the JD4,000 barrier. Nevertheless, if your main concern is to capture images and display them on a computer's screen or illustrate a magazine produced using desktop publishing software, then the quality is more than acceptable. Currently these low-end digital cameras work at a resolution of 640X480 pixels or dots. This is what is called VGA (video graphic array). To get Super VGA, we would need 800X600 or 1024X768. It would be a significant improvement when it comes. It could be here in a year or two and certainly at a consumer price.

Considering that regular ink-jet colour printers can now produce photo-like quality printouts — the new Epson actually delivers an astounding 1,440 dpi or dots per inch — PC users will soon be able to have full control over their photographic process, from taking the pictures to processing and printing them. The dark room may soon become history.

Tale-tellers, liars, fibbers ... and weasels

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen



IT HAS suddenly dawned on me. People here do not actually care what happens to others provided they themselves are doing fine.

For example, and when you first think about it, you would expect that those people who go through the hassle of taking up the study of languages actually do so because they are fascinated by the idea of being able to communicate with others in their respective languages.

It turns out to be a little bit more complicated than this. A bonus for some could be young and attractive tutors who can be accommodating enough to grant their students some of their free time, to have lunch with them, or even join them for a drink. Others on the other hand can be quite shocked by what they first see when a tutor, one not to their liking, walks through the classroom door.

In spite of all this, the concept should, in theory at least, remain the same: Learning, and studying something new with a group of people with whom one shares a common joy.

Because of this, one would not expect to find the same sort of back-stabbing and deceit that one tends to find eating away at student-tutor relationships elsewhere, especially when both of them have absolutely no choice about being with one another.

It is quite an experience to be able to study a foreign language with a native speaker whose only purpose in life is, supposedly, to teach his or her native language to the students. This is when love for the language brings the two together: These natives in a foreign land, and students learning a foreign language.

Some of these tutors do it because they love doing it, others do it for the money, and others do it because they like being with young people. Especially if they have no children of their own.

Unfortunately, things are never quite so rosy. Then again, they never seem to be, do they?

There will always be students whose only concern will remain to knock off home, get off with foreigners and hardly ever go to class, only to scream out at the end of the

day that the language course had been a complete waste of their very precious time and money.

They scream because it simply suits them to behave like spoilt brats whose lollipop has been taken away from them. They do this to cover up their own weakness as people.

It does seem more convenient to blame others for our mishaps, doesn't it?

For their failures, people blame their inability to work with classmates and with one certain teacher. A teacher who is only a foreigner whose relationship with people from his or her own country in a new land is as close as they will ever get to their own country. Try and take this away and you leave them with nothing. But an ungrateful student can try to drive a wedge into the heart of this relationship.

This is just like that mad hatred that drives a person to push down a hill the ice-cream cart of the guy trying to sell you something pleasant. But what satisfaction can there be in destroying another's sole source of livelihood?

What kind of beasts wreck the happiness and the income of the very person whose only mistake was trying to make learning a joyous experience? Only the tale-tellers, the liars, the fibbers and the weasels are capable of such crimes.

And may God have mercy on their wicked souls, or...

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, April 17, 1997

- 1:00 Muppet Show
- 2:20 Asterix
- 3:20 French Varieties
- 3:10 They Came From Outer Space
- 4:20 Time Game — Film
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 French Programme
- 7:30 News headlines
- 7:35 Parenthood
- 8:00 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
- 8:30 Wizard Of Oz — In Concert
- 9:10 Kung Fu — The Legend Continues
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:30 Queen — Best Seller/Part 1 of 3
- 12:00 Les Parapluies de Cherbourg
- French Movie/A Musical/Comedy movie

- 7:35 Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air (Comedy)
- 8:00 Magic Star Awards/Entertainment
- 8:50 Meleod's Daughters - movie
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Taratata

Monday, April 21, 1997

Friday, April 18, 1997

- 1:00 Asterix (Cartoon)
- 2:10 Muppet Show
- 2:35 N.B.A.
- 3:35 L'Ecole des fans (French)
- 4:20 French Movie
- 5:30 The Good King
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 French Programme
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 America's funniest Home Videos
- 8:00 Magic Star Pt.1
- 8:30 Yanni
- Or Julio Iglesias with Pavarotti (pending arrival)
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Queen: Best Seller/Part 2 of 3
- 12:30 Coward of the Country

- 1:00 Astrix
- 2:15 Cartoon
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 Someone To Love (Movie)
- 5:45 Varieties
- 4:50 Ocean Girl
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 French Programme
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 One foot in The Grave
- 8:00 Varieties
- 8:30 In Country
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Jewels/Best Seller/Part 2 of 2
- 01:00 End of T.X.

Tuesday, April 22, 1997

Saturday, April 19, 1997

- 1:00 Asterix (Cartoon)
- 2:15 Little Mermaid
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 The Great Elephant Escape — Film
- 4:30 Innovations (Doc.)
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 French Programme
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Hanging' with Mr. Cooper (Comedy)
- 8:00 Or Prism
- 8:30 Thrill - movie
- 9:10 Time Trax (Science Fiction)
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:20 Queen/Best Seller/Part 3 of 3
- 12:10 Guitar Legends (Rock)

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Budgie (Cartoon)
- 2:30 Grimmy (Cartoon)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 Super Sport Follies
- 4:30 Dog House (Children Drama)
- 5:00 Preserving For The Faste Of It (Doc.)
- 5:15 The Album Show
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 The Office (Comedy)
- 8:00 Tilt
- 8:30 Encounter
- 9:10 Nature of Things
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Snowy River
- 11:15 Mission Impossible

Wednesday, April 23, 1997

- 1:00 Asterix
- 2:15 Phantom Of The Opera (Cartoon movie)
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 The Global Family (Doc.)
- 4:30 Celebration Family - movie
- 6:00 One Hour Musical Comedy (A Salute to Michael Jordan)
- 7:00 Le Journal
- 7:15 French Programme
- 7:30 News Headlines

- 2:00 Holy Koran
- 2:05 Adventures on the Rainbow Pond
- 2:30 Adventures On Rainbow Pond
- 3:00 French Programmes
- 4:00 America's Funniest People
- 4:25 Spell Binder (New)
- 4:50 Challenge (Doc.)
- 5:15 Bordertown
- 6:00 French Programmes
- 7:30 News Headlines
- 7:35 Grace Under Fire (Doc.)
- 8:00 Soldier's Diary
- 8:30 Challenges
- 9:10 Spenser For Hire
- 10:00 News In English
- 10:25 Cobra
- 11:15 Hart To Hart

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Mohammad A. Shugair

JOKES

- **HUSBAND:** "My daughter's private lessons are worth a fortune."
- WIFE:** "How is that?"
- HUSBAND:** "Neighbours get disturbed, so I can buy their accommodation half the price."

- ** I set my hopes on my Creator.
- Allaqtu aamali ala khaaleqi

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Name some of the men about whom it has been fabled that they never died?
2. a) Should strong tea be given to a patient suffering from shock?
b) Should an emetic be given for strychnine poisoning?
c) Should air be excluded from a scald?
d) Should a hot compress be applied to a dislocation?
e) Should a finger suffering from frost-bite be plunged in warm water?
3. In what parts of North America are there large numbers of people of French descent?
4. What is the meaning of the following? — poltergeist, planchette, wraith, doppelganger.
5. Arrange the following in order: - tenor, mezzo-soprano, bass, soprano, baritone, onratto, alto.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

- ** You've banked me up.
Laqad shadad'ta min asri.
- ** You recompense is due from God.
Ajrok ala Allah.
- ** God bless you.
Baraka Allah feek.
- ** In God's protection.
Fee aman'il'lah.
- ** Let not your tongue cut your throat.
Eyyak an yadrib lisanak onoqak.
- ** God willing.
Bemashee'atil'lah.
- ** It's too late.
Fat al-awan.
- ** He knows how to tackle the matter properly.
Ya'rif min ayna to'kal al-katf.
- ** I left him without regret.

PUZZLES

SIX British towns — the county in which each is situated being given — are described below. Study the clues carefully and see how many of them you can spot.

1. HAMPSHIRE. Suggests that Dick Turpin must have been a Cockney.
2. DERBYSHIRE. Pre-prandial instruction to cook.
3. DEVONSHIRE. Seek for this on the door of a farm building.
4. HEREFORDSHIRE. Tells you where to cross the river.
5. CAMBRIDGESHIRE. Military command.
6. DENBIGSHIRE. Advice to a road patrol.

A NEW MONTE CRISTO

French actor Gerard Depardieu (C) arrives accompanied by French TV channel executive chief Etienne Mougeotte (L) for a press conference at the MIP TV (International Television programmes fair) in Cannes April 13. Depardieu will star in the forthcoming television drama The Count of Monte Cristo (Reuter photo)



For Selem Sehab, it is standing room only

By Salwa Morsi Al Taher
Special to the Jordan Times

CAIRO — There is hardly ever a place to "fit a needle" — as the Arabic saying goes — at the Cairo Opera House when Selem Sehab is conducting. Tickets are sold out almost a month in advance, and the house is often declared "full." Not an uncommon happening when Maestro Sehab conducts an evening of works by the late composer Mohammad Al Mugy.

Selem Sehab is a musical phenomenon who took the Egyptian capital by storm ever since he came from Lebanon in the late 80s. So much so that President Hosni Mubarak, personally impressed by his performance and pressed by some opera officials, provoked a constitutional debate by taking the rare decision to grant him Egyptian citizenship for "outstanding services rendered to the country."

But, away from politics and honorific titles, Sehab is first and foremost a talent who has won the hearts and minds of people from all walks of life. He attracts such a varied audience of listeners of different ages and different backgrounds, holding them enraptured for three whole hours, that one cannot but wonder what his secret is.

One does not have to probe the secrets of genius, however. All one has to do is sit back in a chair, listen and watch. The man, who cuts a large and forceful figure on stage grows taller and taller until he seems to fill the auditorium. Carefully selected young singers performing songs by the late Om Kulthum, Abdel Haleem Hafez or Faiza Ahmad succeed in charming the audience. But all eyes keep reverting to centre stage, fixated on the man interpreting, leading, orchestrating and entertaining all in unison.

If this was the Renaissance, this man would be a Florentine. I kept thinking, experiencing this rare osmosis between Western tradition and eastern essence, between the old and the new, the mellow and the thunderous. Sehab

shifts moods easily and naturally: he is once ice-skater, once surfer, here ballet dancer, there army general. His vibrant energy pumps life into the body of his orchestra all through the evening. Very seldom does Sehab allow himself to lose his temper. On these rare occasions, he tends to twist his mouth, shaking his head forbiddingly a few times, staccato.

Every now and then, the professional entertainer in him takes over evidenced in a much-too-amplified movement, in an overdone support for one of his members. Here an unnecessary wink, there an exaggerated accolade. But this is never allowed to slip into "show-biz." How can it, when he becomes totally lost to the world while leading his orchestra, unyieldingly held by his intense, piercing gaze? And when he can still exercise enough stage authority to drown out any untimely show of appreciation by his highly responsive audience?

The man behind the baton

At a table in an informal, noisy spot at the open-air cafeteria of the Cairo Opera, Sehab reveals himself as a hurried but affable man, still leading a Bohemian life of sorts. Here too, he is in his element, a different element. Greetings and interruptions do not disturb him as he anxiously shares — in a mixed Egyptian-Lebanese dialect punctuated by French words — the most important facets of his life and work.

Born 1941 in Jaffa to a Lebanese father, he was raised in a family of "sam-mi'a" (music appreciators). As the grandfather was a musician, a poet and a calligrapher, the three Sehab grandchildren inherited a talent each, with the love of music as a common denominator. Here, Sehab interjects emphatically: "Music elevates the human self to fuse with the divine. When I am on stage, I am in a state of spiritual frenzy. And, a bit more dramatically: 'I am a monk in the sanctuary of art.'"

The Sehab moved from

Palestine to Lebanon in 1947. Mrs. Sehab plays the piano, but the family's prevailing hobby is intense listening to music over the radio. By the time he reached ten years of age, Sehab had already decided he wanted to become a music conductor. How does a child decide such a thing? Does it imply any dictatorial tendencies?

"Being dictatorial is part of a conductor's personality while working," the maestro explains. But what matters most is the width and depth of his artistic knowledge, his vision, his sensitivity and, I would say, his passion. All these allow him to assess the aesthetics of a given work in order to bring it out at its best. It is out of these privileges that the maestro derives his authority.

Sehab enrolled in the Conservatoire du Liban where he studied mainly theory for four years. But it was while working for his first degree that he felt that his musical personality was being formed and that he was able to break what he considers "the artificial barrier" between Eastern and Western music.

In 1965, Sehab went on a scholarship to study music in the then Soviet Union, where he spent 12 years obtaining his BA in conducting in 1971, his MA in conducting symphonic orchestra and opera from the Conservatoire Tchaikovsky in 1976. During the following year, he was appointed to the same institute as assistant stagiaire. He then managed to catch the last boat to enter the port of Beirut in 1977.

During the Lebanese civil war, Sehab was engaged in publishing art critiques and then founded the Beirut Company for Arabic Music which played in different parts of the Arab World and in Europe and won several awards, among which was the Shield of the Tunis Music Festival in 1993. He was invited to Egypt by Dr. Rateba Al Hefni, head of the Arab Music Academy, and it was not long before she convinced him to make Egypt his home. After teaching for two years at the Higher Institute for Arabic Music, he founded

the National Arabic Orchestra which now delights audiences of faithful fans.

As the conductor of the Cairo Opera Chorus, Sehab put together a historical musical document of national songs, scanning almost three quarters of a century. Titled Panorama of the National Song, it covers the most popular songs since Saad Darwish's commemoration of the Saad Zaghlul uprising to the modern songs celebrating Egypt's recuperation of the Sinai. On video, the songs are juxtaposed with snippets of live shots of these events. And yet, this is not the achievement he cherishes most. Sensing that this production had moved me, he stretched the rules of the opera to the maximum, allowing me to attend the rehearsals of his children's chorus.

As soon as I walked in the hall filled with 6 to 18-years-old, I understood Sehab's insistence. In a short-sleeved pink shirt, the maestro was blooming. He almost seemed to glide among them as he guided them, hugging them, pinching cheeks, lifting chins, whispering instructions to a shy young boy, listening intently to a skinny adolescent girl. I could not tell who was having the most fun in this room. And yet, when it was time to be serious and disciplined, there was hardly a whisper in the room. Sehab towers over the youth, mock-menacingly, and, if he as much as tells a child, "Now, I am about to get upset with you" the trick is done. Sehab admits that he imposes particularly high expectations on the children, and that his choice of pieces — mostly classical — is not to everybody's taste (he is otherwise known for his genial choice of pieces for his adult orchestra). He also has to let go of the boys when their voices break, but they almost always come back. For them, he will be teacher, father, clown, friend.

And for us? He will be the maestro... with the very best of him residing in the child within him.



Maestro Selem Sehab in good form before his orchestra

Indonesian singer calm in eye of political storm

By Raju Gopalakrishnan
Reuters

JAKARTA — On the surface, there is little to distinguish Indonesian singer Rhoma Irama and his band from thousands of other rock groups in the world, except perhaps for their immense popularity.

But although the heavy beat of the drums, the acoustic acrobatics of the electric guitar and the chorus girls dancing at the back of the stage are familiar, the lyrics Irama sings are vastly different.

No ballads of unrequited love or angst-filled railings against society here. Irama is a Muslim and proud of it.

His songs urging the spread of Islam and devotion among its followers are hugely popular in Indonesia, a nation of 200 million people, most of whom are Muslim.

But his popularity has had unwelcome side effects.

As political tensions rose in Indonesia's Central Java province over the past two weeks and sporadic riots broke out, many named Irama's switch of political loyalties from the Muslim-orientated United Development Party (PPP) to the ruling Golkar Party as the flashpoint.

A stage where Irama was due to perform in the coastal town of Pekalongan late last month was burned down and clashes erupted between Golkar and PPP supporters. Riots continued into last week in other towns of Central Java, ahead of general elections on May 29 where Irama will be a Golkar candidate.

Irama said he was not to blame.

"I am only the victim," the bearded 50-year-old music star told Reuters recently.

"There are anti-establishment groups which aim to foil the elections... and riots are their modus operandi. This sparked the riots and



The "King" of Indonesia's Dangdut music, Rhoma Irama, practises with his band in his studio in a Jakarta suburb. Irama has cut more than 100 albums, of which about two dozen have sold more than 500,000 copies each. He has acted in movies and his concerts are sold out weeks in advance. Irama is a parliamentary candidate for the ruling Golkar Party (Reuters photo)

not Rhoma Irama's show."

Asked why he had joined Golkar, Irama said he was earlier attracted to the PPP because of its Islamic image. He said he lost that motivation and became politically neutral after the party agreed to support the Pancasila ideology in the mid-1980s, which does not differentiate between the five main religions.

"When I was neutral, I saw that Golkar was becoming more committed to religious values. Because in Indonesia, the majority of the people are Muslims, I believe Golkar has become Islamic," Irama said.

"When I was invited to support Golkar, I could accept it. I'd like to stress that Rhoma Irama never changes... The motivation to support PPP or Golkar is the same... it is to convey the

message of goodwill through Islam," he said.

Irama has cut more than 100 albums, of which about two dozen have sold more than 500,000 copies each, acted in movies and his concerts are sold out weeks in advance.

Irama is called the king of Dangdut music, which refers to the sounds emanating from the Indonesian Gendang drum — the high "dang" note from hitting it with the fingers and the low "dot" note when hitting it with the palm.

Dangdut was already popular with the Indonesian masses but it became a cult art form after Irama imbued it with devotional lyrics and the accompaniments of a modern orchestra.

At a practice session in his Jakarta studio, a building built to resemble a grotto

with a waterfall cascading down rocks cemented on its front wall, three members of his band played guitars, two were at drum sets, another played the saxophone and four attractive women danced in the background.

Irama, a stocky man, played the lead guitar with practised ease and was the lead singer.

Outside, deer gambolled in an open space in his compound, with no sound emanating from the soundproof studio.

It is a lifestyle Irama is happy with and he says becoming a legislator will not change anything.

"I will not leave music because of my seat in the house," he said. "I can divide politics, music and preaching in my life. Politics, music and preaching will go on simultaneously."

Stone magic of Zimbabwe's art village

By Melanie Cheary
Reuters

TENGENENGE, Zimbabwe — Shadowy stone giants loom out of the morning mist before melting back into the thorny forest and shoulder-high African grass.

Thousands of silent sentinels line the muddy red road through green tobacco fields, welcoming visitors to Tengenenge — "the beginning of the beginning."

Here, 150 kilometres north of the capital Harare, is the heart and soul of Zimbabwe's traditional stone sculpture and here the roads, electricity and telephone lines end.

The small African village lies in the foothills of the great Dyke mountains, which cut through Zimbabwe and are believed to be the stamping grounds for numerous ancestral spirits.

A scattering of mud and straw huts under twiggy trees, Tengenenge is home to 300 black artists, their families and about 20,000 stone sculptures.

Stylised birds stand three metres (10 feet) tall, flanked by smaller animals. Simple, fluid human figures stare out from between abstract, geometric renditions of trees and flowers.

Everywhere is the spirit of myth and magic that is at the root of Africa's traditional art.

"Discussion about Zimbabwe's historical stone sculpture would not be

complete without mentioning Tengenenge. It has become the biggest art community of its kind in Africa," said Matt Fischer, an African art dealer based in Harare.

Fischer added that Tengenenge had given birth to sculptors whose figures were found in museums and galleries worldwide.

White African artist and living legend

An old, bearded white man stoops out of a mud hut's opening, rubbing his large, dusty hands on faded khaki trousers.

This is 72-year-old Tom Blomefield, who came from South Africa to what was then Rhodesia in 1948 to farm tobacco and founded Tengenenge's sculpture community in 1965.

United Nations sanctions against the white-ruled country in the 1960s bankrupted his farm and, desperate to make a living, Blomefield and his black labourers by chance uncovered a vast deposit of dark serpentine stone on which Tengenenge lies.

They began to carve and almost immediate success and fame brought a rush of artists from Angola, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia who have now lived here for more than 30 years.

"I used to tell my sons, magic and superstition are tied by make-believe to coincidence and luck. The mountain showed me what to do. It was by luck

that I found the stones. The mountain seems to have the answers," says Blomefield.

"Mister Tom" — as he is called by the community — tells his story, occasionally smoothing his long white hair.

"I always wanted to be an artist. My mother was a painter and my father a carpenter. I wanted to use my hands, but my wife said she married a farmer," Blomefield chuckled.

Close by, two black women — a mother and daughter — stand patiently. They say they are "the keepers of the old man."

They murmur gossip to him in their native Chinjanyanja language. He answers fluently.

"The man is a living legend. When he dies, he will get a state funeral in this country like no one else before. He is Tengenenge and Tengenenge is him," Fischer said.

Natural and supernatural art Tengenenge's statues cast a gloomy mood, but bright clean clothes hanging on lines and noisy, barefoot children skipping by add life and temper the eeriness.

Edson Sedar is 20 years old and has lived in Tengenenge since he was 14. He is known for his elegant "leaf-head" statues — fluid, tapered monoliths with a nose and mouth at the base.

"I see the idea in the trees. Leaves breathe. They live. They are life. They talk through the wind."

Sedar says, while above him the mist wafts through rustling branches.

"This is my work and this is my wife's. These are my children's," says 66-year-old Fred Masarakufa, showing off round spirits and all-knowing, ancient eyes.

Small carvings cost 100 Zimbabwe dollars (\$9) and the giants about 1,600 Zimbabwe dollars, but artists are open to "negotiating."

Spirits guard against guerrillas and guns "when the war started the police came to us and said we'd have to defend ourselves," Blomefield says, describing how he and his artists, armed with two hunting rifles and a broken shotgun, were expected to fight trained cadres with automatic weapons.

Zimbabwe's guerrilla war for independence erupted in December 1972 and raged for seven years but Tengenenge, lying in one of the most troubled areas, survived unscathed.

"When chief Chimurewe died (in 1970) I slaughtered an ox and we drank hundreds of litres of beer. The people say Rambanemuka, the spirit of death, came and said that no blood must ever fall on this land," Blomefield said.

None ever did and Tengenenge survives, a monument to ancient culture and peace.

Photographer David Bailey still top of his league

By Catherine Bremer
Reuters

LONDON — Fifty years after he first picked up a camera, "swinging sixties" photographer David Bailey is still waiting to crown a worthy successor.

Bailey, now 59, made it to the top despite a lack of education and a Cockney accent which initially made it difficult to enter the glamorous world of fashion.

But he argues that the next generation of photographers, although skilled behind the camera, lack fresh ideas and are failing to make their mark.

"The image is dead," he told London's Royal Geographical Society. "It's not art anymore. I think we have to rethink it."

A chronic dyslexic, Bailey

said he never learned to read or write and he apologised for his badly structured speech and nervous presentation. He struggled to comprehend wordy questions from well-read photography students, let alone answer them.

But the 760-strong audience warmed to his spontaneous jokes which overshadowed his obvious discomfort with public speaking.

During his 40-year career, Bailey had a self-confessed weakness for beautiful models, earned a host of awards and garnered a reputation as a provocative "scallywag."

A fashion shoot with Vogue at the age of 20 marked his debut and he soon made a name for him-

self in the glitzy world.

Over the years, his photos of his four wives and girlfriends posing nude stirred up both controversy and admiration.

Bailey, who has moved away from the fashion shots that made him famous and now makes commercials in the United States, said there was not enough originality or identity in adverts.

"Advertising agencies need to come up with ideas not just images," he said. "The commercials are beautifully shot but there are no ideas behind them, no identity."

Bailey said there was too much "copy-cating" with stills cribbed from movies being put together using digital technology.

Famous for his hard-hitting

anti-tur commercial and a Reebok advert of a three-legged man and a bride in trainers, Bailey said he moved to the US because the money was so much better.

"We don't pay our talent in this country," he said, "that's why they all leave."

His three children, Paloma, Fenton and Sascha were at the lecture with their mother Catherine. Bailey's fourth wife, As beautiful in the flesh as on film, the 33-year-old ex-model was unruined when a nude photo of her during pregnancy was shown.

Bailey said while his favourite photos were those of his wife and three children, his ambition was now to photograph Fidel Castro, who he described as "the last remaining icon."

New gene therapy could treat prostate cancer

By Andrea Orr
Reuter

LOS ANGELES — Researchers have discovered a highly precise and potent way to target prostate cancer that could lead to a new treatment that is safer and more effective than chemotherapy, a new study has reported.

The treatment would work by injecting genes into the prostate that kill the cancer cell while sparing the surrounding healthy cells — a method the author of the study likens to a "smart bomb."

The study of this genetically engineered attack on prostate cancer was conducted at the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Centre at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

The findings are published in the Feb. 1 issue of the journal *Cancer Research*.

"Chemotherapy can not differentiate between the good and the bad cells," Dr. Arie Belldegrum, principal investigator for the study and chief of urologic oncology at the UCLA School of Medicine told Reuters. "We are attempting to create a smart bomb."

While the concept of gene therapy to treat cancer is not new, Dr. Belldegrum's team has discovered a delivery system that transports a genetically-altered, cancer-killing gene 1,000 times more effectively than previously known methods.

Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in men, and kills about 40,000 men in the U.S. each year.

But unlike most other

forms of cancer, prostate cancer is also the ideal target for gene therapy because it is almost always associated with a substance in the blood stream, known as the protein specific antigen, or PSA.

All people have PSA genes but only the presence of prostate cancer activates them to produce the protein specific antigen. For this reason, doctors can usually detect prostate cancer with a simple blood test.

"With colon or breast cancer we don't have such specific markers," said Dr. Belldegrum.

Recognising the value of this specific marker, researchers have often focused their gene therapy experiments on prostate cancer, using the promoter, or driver region of the PSA

gene to direct a so-called suicide gene to the targeted cancer cells.

But while the concept worked in theory, the activity has in the past been too weak to work on patients.

What the UCLA research team discovered to make it more practicable is the enhancer region on the PSA gene, which they say makes the treatment 1,000 times more effective by boosting the effectiveness of the delivery system.

In tests, the genetically engineered PSA genes have been shown to attack human prostate cancer cells growing in mice. Dr. Belldegrum said the researchers are now preparing to apply for food and drug administration approval to begin experimenting with the therapy on people within a year or two.

New insight into 'stem' cells in brain, marrow

WASHINGTON (R) — Contrary to what scientists have long believed, the central nervous system has stem cells capable of dividing and forming other kind of cells, researchers have reported.

The finding has potential implications for people with Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, and other central nervous system disorders.

The work appeared in the journal *Science*, which contains several reports on stem cells and their potential for regeneration, repair and healing.

"Stem cells" are precursors of specialised cells. For instance, stem cells in bone marrow give rise to blood cells. But it has long been thought that one reason the adult central nervous system could not repair itself was because stem cells could not divide and form other types of cells. Foetal stem cells do develop or differentiate into one of three kinds of nerve cells — a neuron, astrocyte or oligodendrocyte.

Now, Ronald McKay at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has shown that these fundamental cells can be grown in culture with growth factors and directed to act like foetal cells.

Although he does not yet know the exact chemical signals that this process requires, he has established that the adult

cells are essentially the same as foetal cells and he has identified some proteins involved in cell differentiation.

Scientists' ability to culture these cells will enable them to study their role in brain development and possibly to develop ways of replacing injured brain cells. This may eventually help treat Parkinson's and other brain diseases.

In a separate report in *Science*, a team from Allegheny University of the Health Sciences in Pittsburgh focused on another kind of basic cell, known as marrow stromal cells, found in bone marrow.

Bone marrow transplants are already used to derive stem cells, which make blood cells. But now Dr. Darwin Prockop at Allegheny and his colleagues report that they are exploring how to use these marrow stromal cells, which are the precursors of bone and connective tissue cells.

The goal is to develop ways of treating diseases ranging from osteoporosis, which afflicts the old, and "brittle bone disease" that afflicts the young.

One approach would be to replace flawed cells with healthy ones that could produce normal bone and tissue. Another approach could be to remove some of those cells from a patient, genetically re-engineer them to treat a flaw that causes diseases, and then implant them back into the patient.

New cancer drug launched in Europe

By Maggie Fox
Reuter

LONDON — Schering-Plough launched its anti-cancer drug Caelyx in Europe and said the new technology using tiny balls of fat to help the drug home in on tumours could transform cancer therapy.

Caelyx, already marketed as Doxil in the United States, uses specially reinforced liposomes to encase the standard anti-cancer drug doxorubicin.

The liposomes evidently help keep the drug from being absorbed by the body before it can get to the targeted tumour, and help release the doxorubicin more slowly over time.

"You can deliver more of the drug to the tumour," said Dr. Martin Gore, an oncologist at London's Royal Marsden Hospital. "This is really quite an exciting way forward."

Other attempts have been made at using liposomes to deliver drugs, but they have not worked very well, said Dr. Simon Stewart, an oncologist at London's Hamlet Smith and St. Mary's Hospitals.

"The problem is they become leaky, and the drug doesn't stay in the circulation very long," he told a news briefing.

Caelyx, developed by Sequus Pharmaceuticals of Menlo Park, California, uses what the company calls "stealth liposomes," coated with an inert polymer that attracts water and makes the liposome more stable.

Studies have shown it helps keep the doxorubicin in the body for up to three weeks after an injection. Dr. Stewart said this had the effect of making an injection as effective as a constant infusion of the drug.

The researchers do not know exactly how, but the liposomes hold on to the drug until it is inside the tumour, when it leaks out through the tumour's porous blood vessels.

Caelyx is currently licensed for use against Kaposi's Sarcoma, a once-rare form of cancer that has become one of the major diseases for AIDS. In the United States Doxil is licensed only for use when other cancer chemotherapies have failed.

In a study published in last month's *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, sequus found 20 out of 53 Kaposi's Sarcoma patients responded to the drug.

A larger trial of 241 patients showed more than 58 per cent had partial or complete remission, compared to 23 per cent of those on the standard bleomycin and vincristine regime.

Tests using a radioactive chemical to mark the drug showed it seemed to accumulate in the targeted tumours.

Schering says it has fewer of the side effects associated with chemotherapy such as nausea and weight loss, although it does seem to damage the bone marrow and thus the body's immune system. It does not, however, show the toxic effects on the heart that high doses of standardly delivered doxorubicin can.

Schering and Sequus are now testing the drug on ovarian, breast, and head and neck cancer.

Air pollution linked to skin ailments

By Adam Entous
Reuters

SAN FRANCISCO — Air pollution can rob skin of an important vitamin, aggravating a variety of skin ailments common to people in urban areas, according to recent study.

The University of California at Berkeley study, which was conducted on mice, concluded that ozone rapidly strips Vitamin E from the uppermost layer of skin. This vitamin is an important component of healthy skin, the scientists said.

"This is not what we expected to find," Berkeley researcher Jens Thiele said. "It was very striking how readily Vitamin E was depleted."

The finding may help to explain why urban living can aggravate skin ailments such as

dermatitis, which results in itchy, red, inflamed and scaly skin, the researchers said.

The study was conducted in an ozone chamber on hairless mice, a commonly used model for skin research. Based on the results, the researchers said they believe similar changes occur in human skin.

The university said the study was to be presented at an annual meeting in Santa Barbara, California, of scientists specialising in oxidants and antioxidants.

The Berkeley researchers examined a thin layer at the surface of the skin called the "stratum corneum," which is found in both mice and humans and which prevents pollutants and other chemicals from entering the body.

After exposure for two hours to ozone levels up

to twice those occurring at peak times in heavily polluted cities like Mexico City and Los Angeles, Vitamin E content in the stratum corneum plunged by 25 per cent, they found. After similar exposures for six consecutive days, only a quarter of the original Vitamin E survived.

Although the ozone level used in the experiments was double what might be encountered in the worst real-world conditions, "the point is we only exposed the skin for two hours," Dr. Thiele said. "In the real world, it's really much more of a chronic exposure."

Ozone concentrations peak daily between noon and early afternoon. Mexico City has the highest ozone levels in the world, while Los Angeles leads the United States.

Vitamin E is a fat-soluble compound found in some plant oils and the leaves of green vegetables. It also protects human skin and has long been a folk remedy for skin ailments.

The Berkeley researchers said the depletion of Vitamin E could expose important skin fat molecules, called lipids, to air pollution. Destruction of these lipids, which regulate the movement of materials in and out of the skin, could aggravate skin ailments that commonly afflict people in urban areas.

Thiele said it was also possible the breakdown of lipids releases harmful chemicals that can aggravate skin problems.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

KID STUFF
By Edgar R. Fontaine

ACROSS

- 1 L.A. 4 g
- 2 City on the Mississippi
- 3 A.J. Judd
- 4 Daytime actor
- 5 Actor's part
- 6 Certain merchandise
- 7 Abby
- 8 Director (noun)
- 9 Prospector
- 10 Carter and Gwyn
- 11 Farinow
- 12 Children's game
- 13 Park (Chicago suburb)
- 14 Classics
- 15 Runner (pig)
- 16 Italian poet

DOWN

- 1 Bird pain
- 2 Machine
- 3 Book on rats
- 4 Former president
- 5 Flying figure, in art
- 6 On — with (equi)
- 7 Piece of a deer's leg
- 8 One — (lunar)
- 9 "No, no" — (Latin)
- 10 Actor and author
- 11 "So —" (Latin)
- 12 "So —" (Latin)
- 13 "So —" (Latin)
- 14 "So —" (Latin)
- 15 "So —" (Latin)
- 16 "So —" (Latin)

DIAGRAMLESS 19x19
By James Barrick

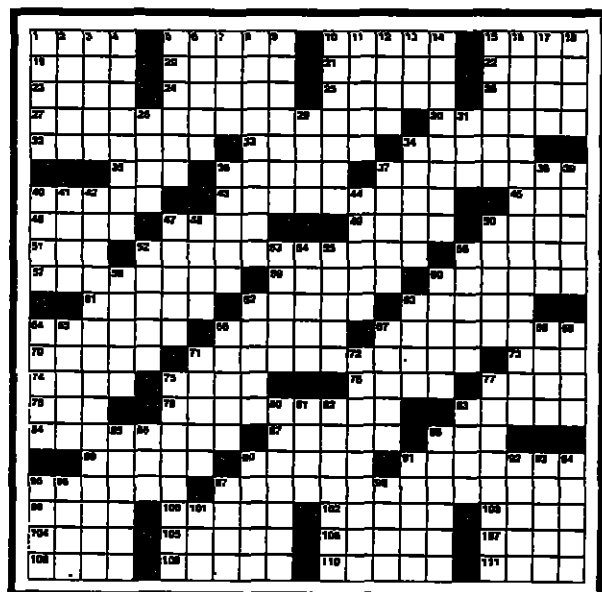
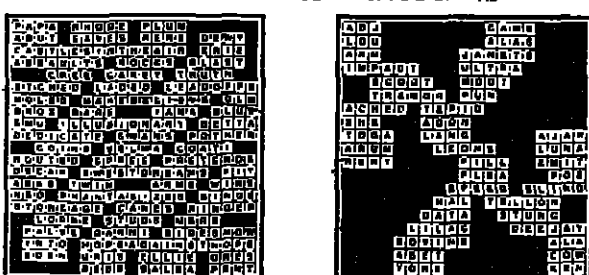
ACROSS

- 1 Come to test after
- 2 Light
- 3 Yarn
- 4 Actor's general
- 5 Yarn
- 6 Use a lot of eggs of the
- 7 Kind of poet
- 8 Ray
- 9 Country singer
- 10 Bard
- 11 London

DOWN

- 1 Fish and back
- 2 A woodpecker
- 3 Pumber's concern
- 4 Dark
- 5 Shoe part
- 6 Make waves, as the
- 7 Country singer
- 8 Bard
- 9 Country singer
- 10 Bard
- 11 London

SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



1. Generous banker, when rushing checks of a few best friends, adds ten more bucks for good measure.

2. At a Halloween gala, father of twin girls grew uneasy when, suddenly, he couldn't tell which witch was which.

3. Dachshunds can be described fairly well as two dogs long but only half a dog high.

4. Little dog with big paws takes a long period between his barks.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. JXQJXJX HSPFJX PCEJN RLPJXRE ED KCAVXAV CSOD LA UBVJ QLP-QLPN XA AJX PCZRUAV KCAH.

2. UX BAP DFUSN I DROSDR-BOIZ-AGE LOOK UT SAD BOD IS ISDUMPO HIZ, LPTD TOO FAR MPVHNGE BAP BIS XUSE BOR AX LPNS KIZDT.

3. CHIEF BIP TUSKER GREENT TUSK "WUSKER GREET" OT WISE CFFUSKE TROTTS SROPT.

4. TRYC ETER ITS HOWMILD ISILE OLY IREVCETRY MI ED ISHOWMILD KYCY.

U.S. study backs hormone therapy after menopause

CHICAGO (R) — Hormone replacement therapy after menopause appears to increase life expectancy for most women, according to a report published Tuesday.

"These findings suggest that hormone replacement therapy may be appropriate for a broader population than is currently recommended by the American College of Physicians," the report from the New England Medical Centre and Tufts University said.

A look at nearly 3,000 women over a 12-year period found that such therapy "should increase the average life expectancy of most postmenopausal women. The only women not expected to gain from this treatment are those at greatest risk for breast cancer, and the least risk for coronary heart disease," it said.

Life expectancy gains of as much as 41 months are possible in some cases, according to the report.

Replacing the oestrogen and progestins lost at menopause seems to increase the risk of breast cancer but it reduces the risk of heart disease and hip fractures — presenting women with a quandary.

The report said breast cancer kills 43,000 women in the United States each year but 223,000 die of heart disease and 65,000 die after hip fractures.

The study was published in this week's *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

In another article in the journal, research supported by Merck Research Laboratories found that a bone-building drug called Alendronate can reduce the risk of fractures, other than those involving the backbone, in postmenopausal women who suffer from osteoporosis — a loss of bone mass.

Direct dose could save cancer lives — study

LONDON (R) — Feeding anti-cancer drugs directly into the liver after surgery for bowel cancer could save up to 10,000 lives a year worldwide, British scientists said Tuesday.

Scientists at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund checked the cases of 4,000 bowel cancer patients in 10 different studies looking at portal vein infusion (PVI) — when cytotoxic cancer drugs are infused directly into the liver.

Cancers often spread through the body, even after surgery, and the liver is a prime site for the start of the spread. "None of these studies could do so on their own, but when we put all the results together it looked as if PVI could improve survival by about five

per cent," said Richard Gray, one of the group's organisers.

He said bowel cancer is so common, and so deadly, that even five per cent could translate into a lot of lives. Bowel cancer is the second-biggest cause of cancer deaths in Britain and is widespread in western industrialised countries.

"Even if this treatment were only moderately effective, its widespread use could prevent about a thousand deaths a year in the United Kingdom alone, and over 10,000 deaths worldwide," he said.

The charity said it was undertaking a study of 10,000 bowel cancer patients in China to check its theory.

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. The Wandering Jew, the Ancient Mariner and the Flying Dutchman. Old soldiers never die, but they do fade away.
2. a) Yes, unless there is internal injury.
b) Yes.
c) Yes.
d) Cold first, then hot.
e) No, dry gentle heat can be applied.
3. In Quebec Province, and round New Orleans.
4. A POLTERGEIST is a spirit supposed to move furniture, break cockery, etc.
A PLANCHETTE is a small board on wheels which writes when hands are rested on it, thus giving, it is claimed, messages from the spirit world.

A WRAITH is the apparition of a living person as a warning of death or disaster.

A DROPPELGANGER is a similar apparition, especially of oneself.

5. Soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto and alto, tenor, baritone, bass.

PUZZLES

The six British towns are:
1. AND-OVER
2. BAKE-WELL
3. BARN-STAPLE
4. HERE-FORD
5. MARCH
6. CON-WAY

Bringing the people back to the city of mosaics

MADABA, Cultural Heritage

Edited by Patricia Maynor Bikai and Thomas A. Dailey

Contributions by Timothy Harrison, Michele Piccirillo, Branwen Denton, Beatrice St. Laurent

Black & white and colour photos and illustrations, 102 pp.,

published by the American Center of Oriental Research, Amman, Jordan, 1996; JD 18 (with an insert text in Arabic)

ONE OF the striking developments in the Jordanian archaeological sector in recent years has been the relatively large financial support that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided for research, analysis, conservation and publishing. Though USAID has now largely stopped its tourism-related funding of projects in Jordan, the momentum of recent years' assistance continues to be felt and seen in the country, in the form of important and nicely conserved sites (Ayla/Aqaba, the Petra Church), important documents from antiquity (the Byzantine period Petra papyrus scrolls), a powerful computerised database of known sites, an expanding cohort of trained Jordanian conservation technicians, and handsome, rich books such as this volume.

This book is more modest in format, length and colour contents than previous books that ACOR has published on subjects such as the mosaics of Jordan or the Amman Citadel Temple. Like them, this book will please both the scholar who requires details and annotated notes, and the general reader who only wants to visit Madaba and look at old buildings and mosaics. Priced at just JD 18, this book is also more within reach of most people.

It is also noteworthy because it contains an insert with the text in Arabic, thus making the book far more accessible to Arabic speakers whose interest in the subject may not be matched by proficiency in English. This is important because it removes any possible language barrier from officials and citizens at the local level who may want to learn more about Madaba's cultural heritage. It is a worthy precedent that other publishers and authors are well advised to follow in

the drive to promote greater appreciation and protection of Jordan's cultural heritage protection. This book maintains the very high standard of ACOR publications of recent years, and it also points the way to the kind of publications that will prove to be increasingly relevant for Jordan in the years and decades to come: ones that would provide comprehensive documentation for an urban site or region, in a situation where ancient remains and even recent structures from the last 100 years are threatened with destruction due to the pace of modern construc-

tion and/or farming. This book emerged from a project which ACOR and the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities have been implementing since 1991, with funding from USAID. The project has aimed to preserve the many ancient treasures of Madaba by documenting them and protecting those that are in the centre of the city. The core of this project is the archaeological park in central Madaba, which now includes several important mosaic floors, several church remains and a stretch of the paved Roman road; other components include the shelter over the Church of the Apostles, and renovated buildings that are used by the park staff and the Madaba Society shop.

An important part of the project was a thorough survey and assessment of the current state of the many archaeological remains and turn-of-the-century structures in the city. ACOR made a baseline survey of central Madaba in 1993 by Timothy Harrison, Adeb Abu Shmeis and Osama Tawal and its results form the

heart of this book. The survey identified over 130 pre-modern buildings and many other architectural fragments. The survey was followed by a compilation of a brief history of Madaba (chapter one), an analysis of the surface survey pottery (chapter two), a review of the archaeological remains (chapter three) and a study of the vernacular architectural remains in the city from the turn of the century (chapter four). All of these cultural resources were located on maps that present the cultural resources of Madaba in the context of the modern town; these maps are available for anyone who

Book review

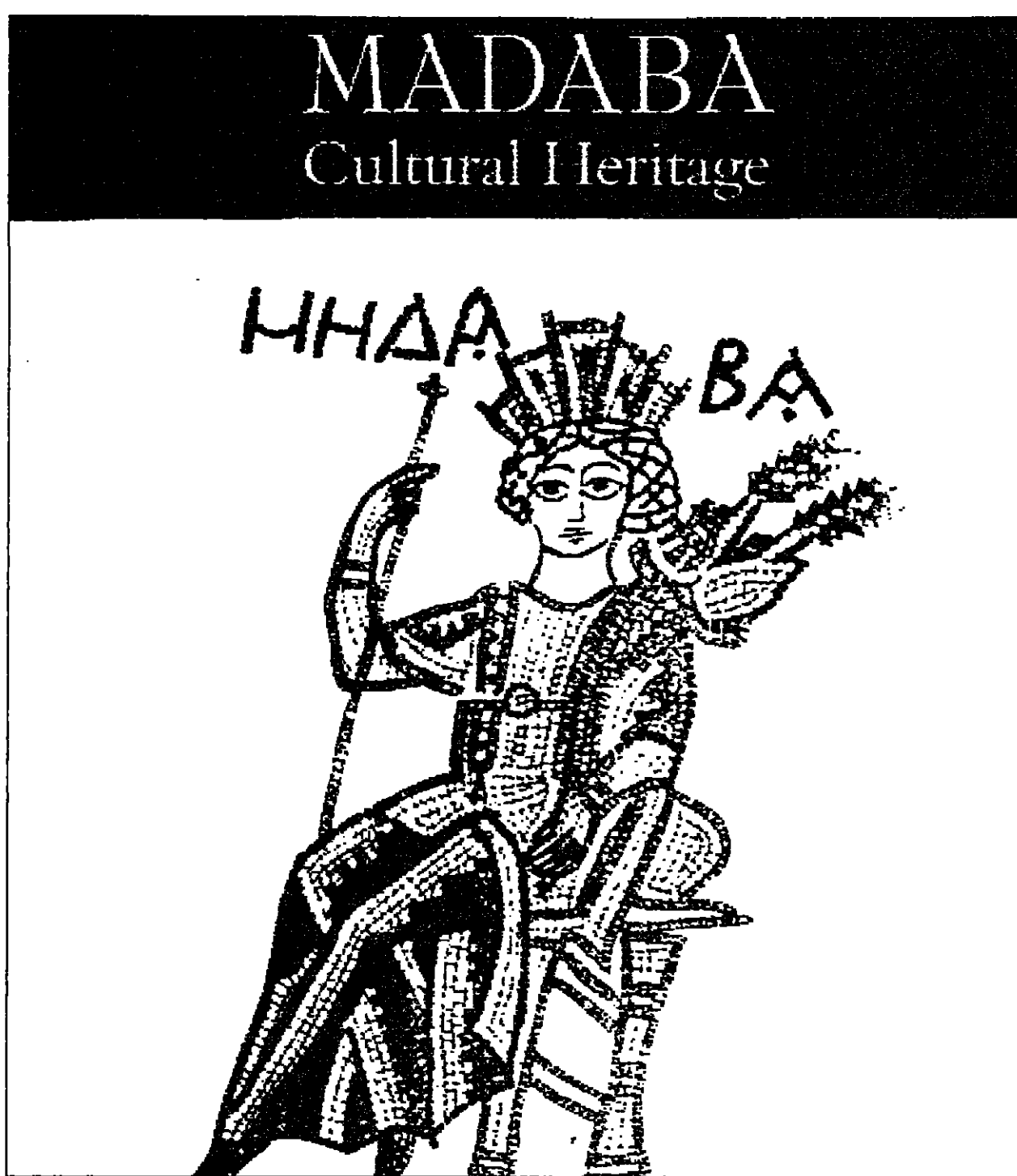
and the surrounding Moabite region fall to the tribes of Israel and are allotted to the tribe of Reuben. The town's history is succinctly reviewed in five fact-filled pages, followed by an equally fascinating review of the modern rediscovery and study of the city and its remains, especially the map of the Holy Land in the Church of St. George that was first noted in 1884.

One of the most striking parts of the book is a series of nine photographs showing the expansion of the town from 1902 until today. This sequence captures the essence of the book's purpose — to point out both the archaeological and cultural wealth of the town, and the threat that its cultural remains face from continuing, rapid urban expansion.

Chapter two briefly reviews the results of the 8,242 pottery shards that were recovered from the surface survey. The preliminary pottery reading identified remains from almost every period in the past 4,500 years, and also pointed out several important settlement shifts that took place in the town's history. In fact, the project's combination of surveying and excavations has once again confirmed that surface pottery collections, even in urban settings that are badly disturbed by modern activity, "still reflect to a significant extent what lay below the surface."

The survey and excavations show that the town was confined to the central mound and its acropolis in the Bronze and Iron ages, expanded north in the Nabataean and Roman periods, reached its largest size in the late Roman and Byzantine periods, decreased in size sharply or perhaps even was abandoned in the early Islamic era (probably in the 9th century), and witnessed some habitation or human activity in the medieval Islamic and Ottoman periods.

The following chapter of the book reviews all the archaeological remains from the ancient town, providing black and white photographs and drawings that offer a nice armchair tour of the ancient city (only a few photos in colour in the first part of the book capture the full beauty of the mosaics).



The cover of the book

This chapter includes many well known mosaics, some new ones discovered in recent excavations (such as the Burnt Palace), and mosaics that have been lost, destroyed or moved from their original locations.

The fourth and longest chapter, at 40 pages, is perhaps the most interesting and important in the book, because it covers ground that has been largely ignored in recent decades — the cultural history of the town and its reflection in the standing architecture. This chapter, written by Branwen Denton and Beatrice St. Laurent, starts with a very nicely written overview of how "the architectural and

urban development of Madaba reflects the particular historical, religious and social circumstances of the town's resettlement in the late 19th century, as well as contemporary trends in architectural style and building techniques... (that) are seen in the civil, religious and vernacular architecture of the town."

The authors discuss how the layout of buildings reflected their owners' cultural values and family needs, and they also point out Madaba's links at the turn of the century with other nearby urban centres such as Salt, Jerusalem and Nablus. The facade of the Beit Farah, for example, resembles the Abu

old buildings is a good way to protect them in the long run.

Most of this chapter is a catalogue of 34 structures, each documented with information, some photographs, and line drawings and plans. This is the most interesting part of the book because it brings to life the family histories and urban heritage of the site, which in many cases is enlivened by photographs of the original house builders or owners from the turn of the century. Perhaps the most striking in this respect is the painted, life-size bust of Sheikh Yacoub Shweihat in Beit Shweihat, which was executed "in the Europeanising style fashionable in the Ottoman Empire."

Some of the line drawings are also works of art in themselves, notably Beit Farah, Beit 'Alamat, and Beit Jumetan. My favourite old buildings are the small shops, most of which are still used for their original purpose and, in some cases, retain their wooden doors. Churches, a mosque and a mill are also documented.

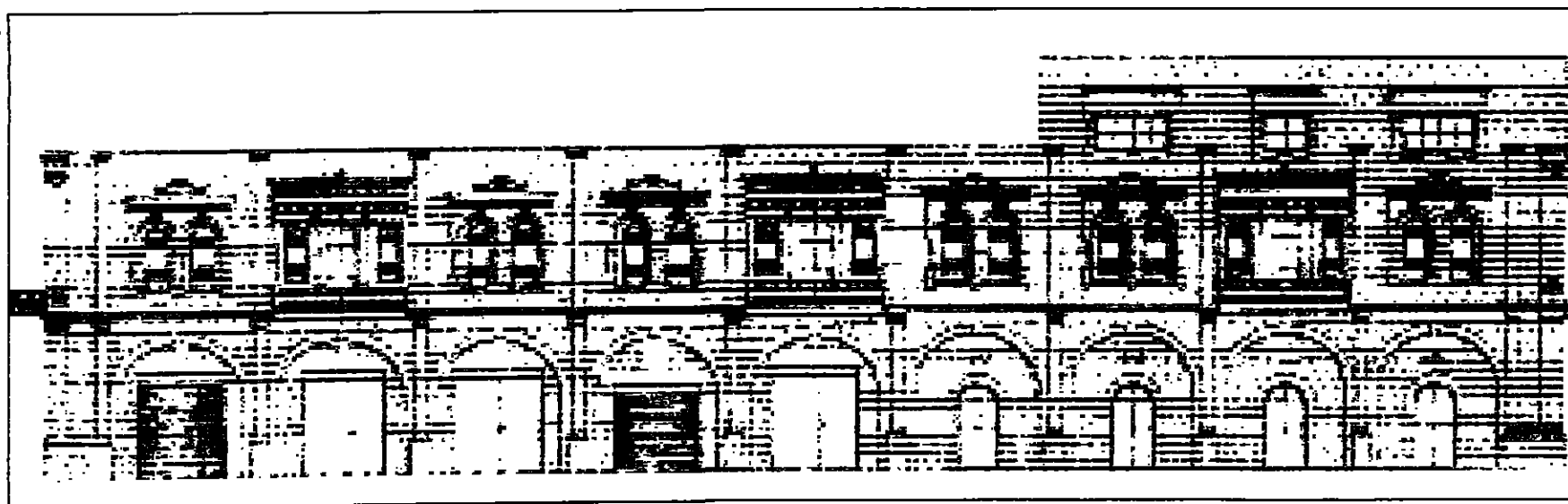
The strength of this book is that it takes us beyond the traditional touristic focus on the mosaics of Madaba and introduces us to the diversity and humanity of its people, as seen through the structures they built for living, wor-

ship or commerce. This is hinted at in the title of the book — cultural heritage — and is well fulfilled in the book itself. The reader gets a good feel for the urban fabric and cultural identity of Madaba town, and also for the fact that this identity has been changing and evolving for thousands of years.

The town's expansion and contraction over time become more comprehensible. This is partly due to the repeated documentation of people expanding or modifying their houses as their families grew, and partly due to the impact of the regional political situation and connections (connections that are themselves often captured in the architectural fabric of the place, in the form of building styles or materials).

Finally, the wide range of structures documented helps us imagine the life of people in the second half of the last century. Along with the many houses and ancient mosaics we also see churches, public buildings, water cisterns, mills, shops and souks, a stretch of the Roman road and hints of the Roman town's now vanished east gate and colonnaded forum. The city of mosaics, as Madaba is often called, is transformed in this book into a city of its people.

Rami G. Khouri



The facade of Beit Farah, build starting in 1898, with a typical arrangement of shops on the ground floor and residential space on the second storey

Earth's symptoms worsen since Rio summit — report

WASHINGTON (R) — Five years after the earth summit in Rio de Janeiro, treaties to protect the atmosphere and biodiversity are floundering, the world's population is spiralling, and more than one billion people cannot feed themselves, the Worldwatch Institute has recently said.

In a downbeat assessment of the world's troubled environment, social and political unrest, and prospects for feeding itself, Worldwatch's annual State of the World Report listed a series of problems that have worsened since the landmark world environ-

ment summit.

"Since Rio, human numbers have grown by 450 million, vast areas of forest have been stripped of trees, and annual emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels, the leading greenhouse gas, have climbed to all-time highs, altering the very composition of the atmosphere," the report by the Washington-based think tank said.

Two of the key initiatives from Rio — treaties to cut fossil fuel emissions that are warming the atmosphere and to protect biodiversity — have stumbled on a lack of commitment from major nations, the

report said.

In particular, it said the United States' environmental leadership has receded in the last five years as it has missed targets set in the climate convention by wide margins and failed to ratify the convention on biological diversity.

The United States is among eight countries with 56 per cent of the world's population and 53 per cent of its forests that "have the Rio agenda — and the fate of the earth — in their hands," the report said.

Other "environmental heavyweights" are Germany, Japan, Russia,

China, India, Indonesia and Brazil, countries that Worldwatch said should play a bigger role in bridging differences between industrialised nations of the northern hemisphere and developing nations of the southern hemisphere.

China, India and other developing countries increasingly hold the key to reversing the environmental slide, and their burgeoning use of resources may force developed countries to face up to their own unsustainable economies, the report said.

The report also faulted international institutions, and rich countries' flagging

commitments to them, for failing to confront environmental threats.

For example, it said government funding of the United Nations Development Programme and the U.N. Environment Programme has been inadequate.

The World Bank, which lends some \$20 billion annually to developing nations, has claimed to have expanded its environmental lending since Rio. But the report said, "it continues to lend large sums for development schemes that add to carbon emissions and destroy natural ecosystems — while the

broader vision of a sustainable economy is neglected."

The State of the World Report — the 14th in the usually grim series — cited some improvements, including the Montreal protocol to phase out use of ozone-depleting chemicals and slower-than-expected population growth.

But it said, "too many governments still pursue economic growth at any price, ignoring the fact that damage to global commons such as the atmosphere and the oceans could severely disrupt the world's economies."

"Until finance ministers

— and more importantly prime ministers — take these problems as seriously as environmental officials do, nations will continue to undermine the natural resource base and ecosystems on which they depend," it said.

While global schemes such as the Montreal Protocol have had some success, the report said Rio likely marked the end of a "Marshall plan" approach to environmental problems.

"If the world's economies are to be put on a sustainable footing in the 21st century, it is unlikely to be the result of a single

top-down plan," Christopher Flavin, one of the report's authors, said.

"The answer is more likely to lie in an eclectic mix of international agreements, sensible government policies, efficient use of private resources, and bold initiatives by grassroots organisations," Mr. Flavin said.

But, the report said Rio "energised the efforts of private citizens to promote environmentally sustainable development," and encouraged non-government organisations around the world to "provide ideas as well as pressure for change."

Gulf oil income loss offset by dollar gain

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A drop in the oil income of Arab Gulf states caused by a slide in crude prices will be partially offset by the strong U.S. dollar, to which their currencies are linked, bankers have said.

"If you want to think about the main beneficiaries of the strong dollar in this region, they are the Gulf countries," an Abu Dhabi-based banker said. "Their currencies are attached mainly to the U.S. dollar. Any rise in its rate means more strength in Gulf currencies, higher return from overseas investments in dollar, and cheaper imports from non-dollar countries," he pointed out.

Reacting to widespread expectation of another increase in the U.S. interest rates, the dollar last week shot to 127 yen, its highest level against the Japanese currency in more than four years.

It also climbed to 1.725 German marks, the highest rate since April 1994.

The surge in the greenback came as oil prices continued their downward trend under pressure of high supplies by the 11-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, resumption of crude exports by sanctions-hit Iraq, and lower drawdown from Western crude inventories.

The price of North Sea Brent crude touched around \$18 last week, nearly \$7 lower than its level in January.

Experts said oil prices could lose more in the second and third quarters due to weak seasonal demand.

Oil exports provide more than two thirds of the total earnings of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, making their economies and annual budgets highly vulnerable to crude price fluctuations.

"The recent direction in oil prices is not encouraging as it means more losses in the GCC's revenues. But this could be partly offset if the U.S. dollar remains strong through the year," a Riyadh-based banker said.

"Gulf states and other producers are paid in dollars for their oil sales. Oil prices could be lower, but in real terms GCC states will earn more as the dollar's purchasing power gets stronger," he indicated.

The currencies of five GCC members — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) — are effectively pegged to the U.S. dollar. Kuwait's dinar is linked to a basket of major world currencies but the dollar has the lion share, at more than 40 per cent.

A weak dollar means the GCC will have to spend more on imports from the likes of Japan and Germany, among the top

exporters to the region.

GCC states, which control nearly 45 per cent of the world's oil resources, have pondered pegging their currencies to a basket of currencies from their main economic partners to pave the way for monetary union in line with a 1983 economic pact.

But some of them object to detaching their currencies from the dollar on the grounds it is the official price of oil. Others are believed to have cited political considerations for their reservations.

"Of course, the surge in the dollar will not shore up the deficits in the GCC's budgets. But at least it will compensate them for part of their losses from the decline in oil prices," a UAE bank manager said.

Most GCC states projected higher spending in 1997 as they forecast firm crude prices albeit not as strong as they were last year.

UAE official sees higher spending in '97

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is expected to approve higher spending for 1997 following pay rises for the civil servants and an upturn in development projects, an official has said.

Jouan Al Dahiri, undersecretary of the Abu Dhabi Finance Department, said the increase would be in both local expenditure in Abu Dhabi and federal spending by the UAE, which groups Abu Dhabi with six other Gulf Emirates.

"The increase is due to a 25 per cent pay rise ordered by President Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan last year for national employees," he told the Al Khaleej newspaper.

"Development spending also increased as there is an upswing in investments, which I hope will boost economic activity," he said.

The UAE has yet to release its federal budget for calendar year 1997, prompting the finance ministry to make temporary monthly allocations for the nearly 24 ministries and other government offices.

Spending in 1996 was set at 18.25 billion dirhams (\$4.97 billion) and revenues at 17.3 billion dirhams (\$4.71 billion), leaving a deficit of around \$260 million.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1997

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This will be a very fast-moving day today in business, so keep your head and think carefully on a plan of action which will make your efforts quite successful. Set aside some time for relaxation tonight with your loved ones.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Your mate may be feeling a bit depressed today, so do whatever you can to improve the situation. Be sure to drive with care while on the highway later this evening, so you will avoid getting into any difficulties.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A fellow business associate has some great new ideas today which can help you advance, so listen to this person and show your gratitude for the assistance. Later this evening you can be with close friend in recreational activities.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Modernising your techniques today can help you to become more efficient. Pay particular attention to the state of your health later this evening so that you won't miss any business activities which are critical.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This could be an unpleasant evening if you don't keep a promise you have made to your mate which could present a difficult situation. Be more kind and considerate to your friends today and thereby gain their assistance.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You will have an opportunity today to improve home conditions and create better harmony among your loved ones. This is a good time later this evening for entertaining guest in your home by being the perfect host.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) If at all possible today, any necessary appointments should be scheduled for this evening. Arrange a new recreational activities with your fellow associate which they will find enjoyable to participate in at this time.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Attend to the needs of your loved ones today, especially those of a monetary nature. A trusted advisor can give you some good suggestions for making your career activities much more successful in the days ahead.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Some good friends today can do much to assist you achieve your goals, so don't hesitate to ask for assistance if you think you need it. Later this evening will be good for meeting with fellow associates and labouring on any projects.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) If you are having any financial difficulties, discuss with an expert who can help you overcome them. Try to be more efficient in your career activities and thereby you can gain the recognition of a bigwig.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Contact a successful person you know today for some good advice on how to improve your business situation. Help out a friend later this evening who is having a tough time and he or she will truly be grateful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You can find the situation today to an anxiety you have by discussing it with a good friend who can be of great assistance. Go out on the town later this evening with your mate, however don't spend too much.

BIRTHSTONE OF APRIL: Diamond — Amethyst

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 16/04/97 17:55

Currency	USD	GBP	DEM	JPY	CHF	FRF	ITL	ESP
US Dollar	1.7203	0.8163	1.4635	125.73	1.3987	1702.00	1.9410	5.8066
DE Mark	0.6799	1.0000	1.0000	72.77	0.8067	166.36	1.1255	3.2076
GB Sterling	1.2220	1.0000	1.2220	163.26	1.2220	2760.84	1.1483	3.4188
CH Franc	0.6910	1.1729	0.6910	85.55	0.6910	1182.15	1.3211	3.2647
JP Yen	0.0080	1.3738	0.4899	1.0000	1.1119	12.84	154.48	4.6204
CA Dollar	0.7148	1.2347	0.4406	1.0494	1.11	127.63	1.2475	3.1870
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0147	0.3818	0.0002	1365.75	0.8211	11.41	3.4130
NL Guilder	0.5132	0.4848	0.5189	71.37	0.4848	0.7185	0.7576	2.2836
FR Franc	0.1722	0.2973	0.1000	25.2584	0.1722	0.3420	33.4200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	GBP	DEM	JPY	CHF	FRF	ITL	ESP
US Dollar	0.7080	0.3704	0.5770	3.6400	0.3041	3.6728	1540.00	3.3800
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	0.2666	0.2672	0.8336	0.4294	5.1673	2175.14	4.7825
GB Sterling	0.2666	1.0000	0.8336	0.87	0.8511	0.88	410.82	0.9028
Bahraini Dinar	2.46	1.8781	0.8406	0.98	0.8080	0.74	406.51	0.8421
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	0.1033	1.0303	0.0838	1.01	423.00	0.9302
Kuwait Dinar	3.2689	2.3288	1.2348	1.2389	1.17	12.08	204.88	0.9302
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	0.1012	1.0128	0.0828	1.01	418.32	0.9220
Libanese 1000	0.85	0.8587	0.2466	2.3638	0.1974	2.3848	-	2.1987
Egyptian	0.2553	0.2091	1.1076	0.1113	1.0790	0.0888	1.0846	464.81

Energy

Commodity	Price
Brent	17.35
WTI	19.40
Bony	17.35
Dubai	16.80
UL Gas	187.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	GBP	DEM	JPY	CHF	FRF	ITL	ESP
SA Riyal	0.2688	0.4808	0.18438	0.39182	0.35779	-	-	-
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47077	0.18787	0.40913	0.34247	-	-	-
KW Dinar	3.2889	5.88505	2.02758	4.83325	413.736	-	-	-
SH Dinar	0.2770	4.88505	1.83559	3.88884	333.857	-	-	-
CY Pound	1.9434	3.3583	1.1972	2.8534	244.306	-	-	-

Metal Prices

Commodity	Price
Gold (oz's)	339.8
Silver (oz's)	478
Platinum (oz's)	368.9
Al (3 Months)	1553
Cu (3 Months)	2271
Zinc (3 Months)	1252
Lead (3 Months)	842
Ni (3 Months)	7310

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
USD	5.52	5.73	5.89	6.09
GBP	6.02	6.29	6.48	6.65
JPY	0.53	0.50	0.44	0.55
DEM	3.12	3.00	3.00	3.19
FRF	3.18	3.18	3.22	3.32
CHF	1.86	1.79	1.84	1.83
ITL	6.96	6.82	6.76	6.64

Main Equity Indices

Index	Value
New York	6591.87
DOW JONES	4.81
S&P 500	0.07
London	754.83
FT-SE 100	0.07
Tokyo	18031.2
Nikkei 225	0.54
Paris	2620.01
CAC 40	-0.02
Frankfurt	3363.45
DAX	25.37

Energy

Commodity	Price
Coffee (c/lbs)	198.25
Cocoa (c/lbs)	1477
Sugar (c/lbs)	310.8
Wheat (c/lbs)	8
Soy (c/lbs)	22.85
Tea (c/lbs)	142
Barley (c/lbs)	0
Rice (c/lbs)	486

JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Price
US Dollar	0.708
GB Sterling	1.1478
DE Mark	0.4083
CH Franc	0.4891
FR Franc	0.1214
JP Yen	0.008
NL Guilder	0.3831
IT Lira	0.4186

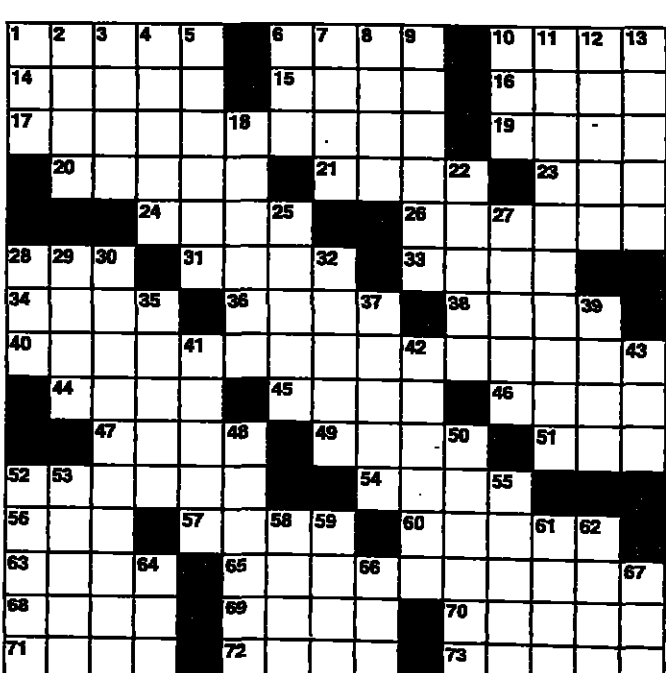
THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Lorenzo of "Renegade"
- Chat Indiscreetly
- Sheepish noises
- Island near Venezuela
- Atmosphere
- N.Z. tree
- Luxury on rails?
- Biblical name
- Sharon of "Cagney and Lacey"
- Kett of comics
- Terminal letters
- Mythical birds
- Computer code
- Father
- Court dividers
- Uncommon
- Narrative poem
- Squirrel's hoard
- Imogene of old TV
- The inn thing?
- Author Richard Henry
- Trill
- Federal guys
- Skullcap
- Jewish month
- Touch lightly
- Say again
- Bus stops: abbr.
- Baba
- Exchange
- Clockmaker
- Confidential assistant
- Violin maker
- Shrub
- Rise
- By surprise
- Ticket ends
- Tenant farm, in England
- Squirming
- Nine inches
- Blind parts

DOWN

- Once around the track
- Snug as a bug in
- Think (over)
- More qualified
- Dellah's pal
- Forbidden
- Clare Boothe
- "I smell"
- Exchange
- Bikini top
- Confidential assistant
- Violin maker
- Shrub
- Rise
- By surprise
- Ticket ends
- Tenant farm, in England
- Squirming
- Nine inches
- Blind parts
- Mimicked
- Instructive
- Groove
- Small craft
- Transmits
- On the water
- Captures
- Marbles
- Explosive letters
- Tiny marks
- Separates fibers
- Rajah's wife
- Typist's choice
- Hemp for rope
- Journey
- Handy dance?
- Southwestern plant
- Color
- English cathedral city
- Stopover
- Footlike part



by Vivian O. Collins



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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Take care of any business obligations you have early in the day today. Later this evening will be a fine time for socialising and making new contacts so take this opportunity to mingle with as many people as possible.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can be of real service to the public at this time if you get into some social activities. This evening should be a wonderful time for romance so show that you truly do appreciate your mate by doing something special.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You should stop procrastinating about some important business matters and just follow through with them so that you can gain recognition of those in authority. Try to create an atmosphere of cooperation with fellow associates.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If you have to do any research today, it is the time to find the information you need. Pay special attention to your health so that you won't miss any days of career activities which are important to your success.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Labour on improving the situation at home today so that it will become a more comfortable place for you and your loved ones. Smooth out any disagreements with your loved ones and friends so that harmony does exist.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Have a few good friends in today who are cheerful and helpful, and have a happy and wonderful evening. Be very cautious while driving on the highway, so that you won't get into any difficulties which should be prevented.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) An expert can give you fine advice today for adding to your income and thereby making your life and those of your loved ones more comfortable. Listen carefully to this person's suggestions and follow them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You can obtain a long-desired wish today if you set your mind on it and arrange your budget accordingly to have the funds necessary. Labour on improving your property so that you can make it more beautiful and increase its value.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you do any socialising this evening, stay around only those people with whom you are compatible. Be sure to drive carefully while on the highway today, so that you can avoid an obstacle with others.

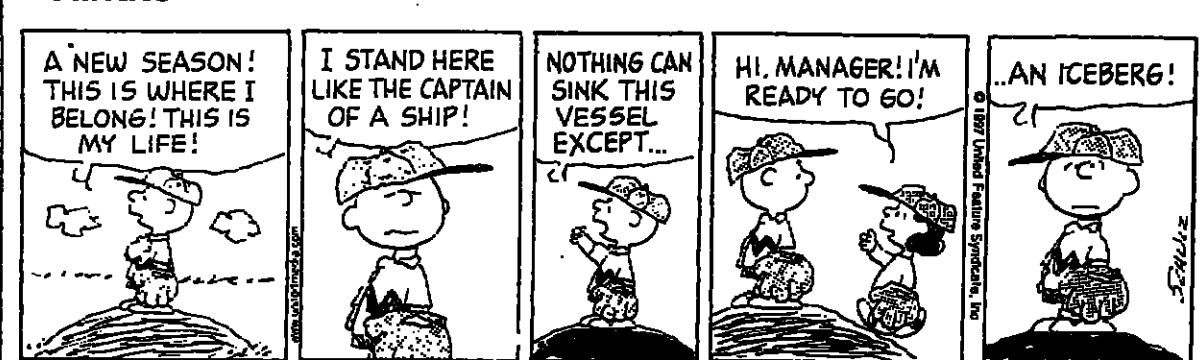
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Look carefully at the amount of career activities you have to accomplish today, and arrange a schedule which will allow plenty of time for recreational activities. Later this evening will be good for going out on the town with your mate.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you use a bit of charm today, you can easily get some friends and fellow associates to stand behind a new project you have in mind. Later this evening will be good for meeting with knowledgeable people for their suggestions.

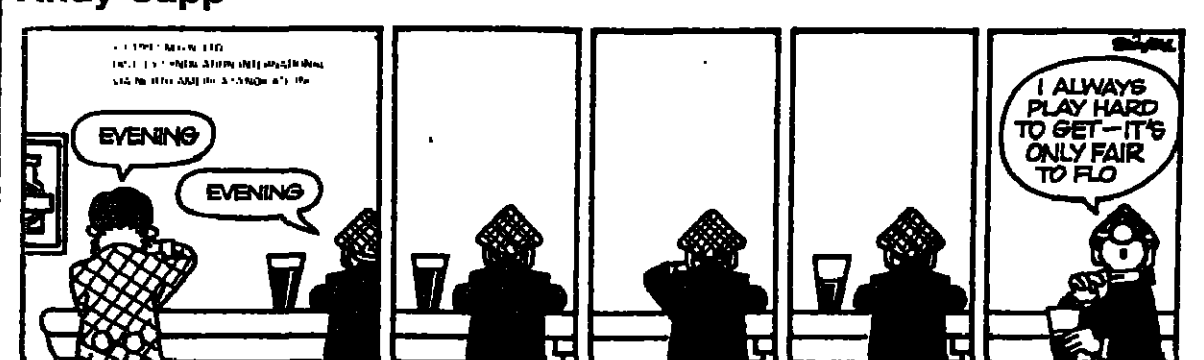
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Stay alert to what is going on around you today, and you could discover some great opportunities. This is a good time to plan some recreational activities which will be fun for your close friends and loved ones.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst.

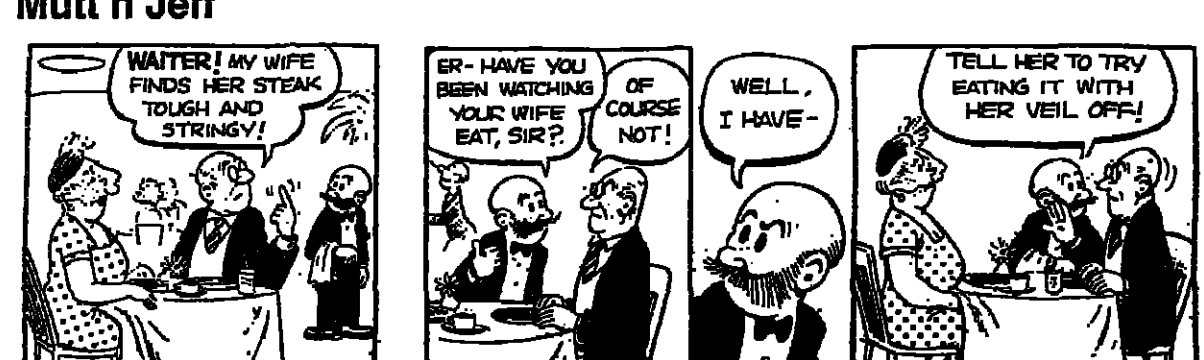
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



Group 3 World Cup qualifiers Jordan prepares to meet Bahrain Saturday

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE KINGDOM'S national soccer team has started preparations to face Bahrain Saturday when the second leg/first round Asian World Cup qualifiers kick off in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Jordan goes into the second leg with a very slim chance of securing the only qualifying berth from the group after failing to win in the first leg which was held in Manama, Bahrain.

Jordan drew 0-0 with the UAE who beat Bahrain 2-1. Bahrain kept their qualifying chances alive after defeating Jordan 1-0.

The result put Bahrain in second place behind the UAE while Jordan slipped to third and last in the group.

The Kingdom's team now has the hard task of having to win both upcoming matches provided hosts, the UAE, draw or lose in their match against Bahrain.

Meanwhile, the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF) held an extraordinary meeting Tuesday in which it issued a statement urging the national team to do their utmost when the second leg gets underway April 19.

The JSF evaluated the Kingdom's results so far and described as satisfactory their goalless draw with the UAE — a 1990 World Cup qualifier and currently Asia's second ranked team.

The JSF, however, noted that the team was below form in their match against Bahrain and recalled defender Mohammad Mahadin back to Amman after unsportsmanlike conduct during which he attacked a Bahraini player and was subsequently suspended by the international soccer federation, FIFA.

Onlookers have criticised the team for not being able to score in both their matches. Even in eight friendly internationals in preparation for the qualifiers, Jordan could only score 6 goals — all against Oman.

Jordan's record included two wins, three defeats and three goalless draws.

The Kingdom's only wins were 2-0 and 4-1 in Muscat. Jordan had two matches against Lebanon losing 1-0 and drawing 0-0.

In matches against Iraq, Jordan twice lost 1-0 while both matches against Syria ended in goalless draws.

This is the fourth time Jordan plays in World Cup qualifying matches after taking part in first round qualifiers for Mexico 96, Italy 90, and USA 94.

Thirty-six Asian countries are contesting the first round

World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups.

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Taiwan.

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan.

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain.

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao.

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia.

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong.

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore.

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan.

Group 9: Iraq, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines.

FIFA has decided to hold the second round in Singapore.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

Jordan's 31-member delegation includes nine officials alongside the lineup including Mu'taz Rishbeh, Yousef Ammouri, Mohammad Mahadin, Amjad Taher, Hussein Shanineh, Faisal Ibrahim, Subhi Suleiman, Jamal Abu Abed, Adnan Awad, Nart Yada, Jiryes Tadros and Badran Shaqran, Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mohammad Abu Daoud, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Abdallah Abu Zame'h, Isam Mahmoud, Munir Abu Hantash, Bassam Al Khatib, Ahmad Khalil, Ja'far Hammad and Hassounah Sheikh.

JTV coverage of Group 3 matches

Bahrain — Jordan	April 19	6:30 p.m.
UAE — Bahrain	April 22	6:30 p.m.
UAE — Jordan	April 26	6:30 p.m.

GROUP 3 STANDINGS

Team	W	L	D	GF	GA	Pts
UAE	1	-	1	2	1	4
Bahrain	1	-	-	2	2	3
Jordan	-	1	1	-	1	1

Gascoigne's comeback too late for Georgia

GLASGOW (AFP) — Midfielder Paul Gascoigne looks likely to miss England's important World Cup qualifier against Georgia on April 30, despite making his comeback for Rangers on Tuesday night.

Unless England coach Glenn Hoddle is prepared to take a huge gamble on the 29-year-old's fitness, Gascoigne will have to wait for the May 31 trip to Poland for a possible England return.

The Rangers midfielder returned to action for the first time since January 25 on Tuesday night.

He played for just 20 minutes as a substitute in a 6-0 victory over Raith at Stark's Park which virtually ensures a ninth successive title for Walter Smith's side.

But Dundee United's Scottish Cup commitment have denied Gascoigne the chance of a 90-minute outing next week to try to show Hoddle he could have been ready for the April 30 Wembley meeting with Georgia in the World Cup.

Rangers were scheduled to visit United next Wednesday but the match is off with the Tannadice club meeting Kilmarnock in a Scottish Cup semi-final replay.

So with Rangers not in action again until Monday, May 5, against Motherwell, Gascoigne will be left kicking his heels, working on his fitness after an ankle problem.

"I gave him a taste of playing again last night and he is easing his way back," said Smith.

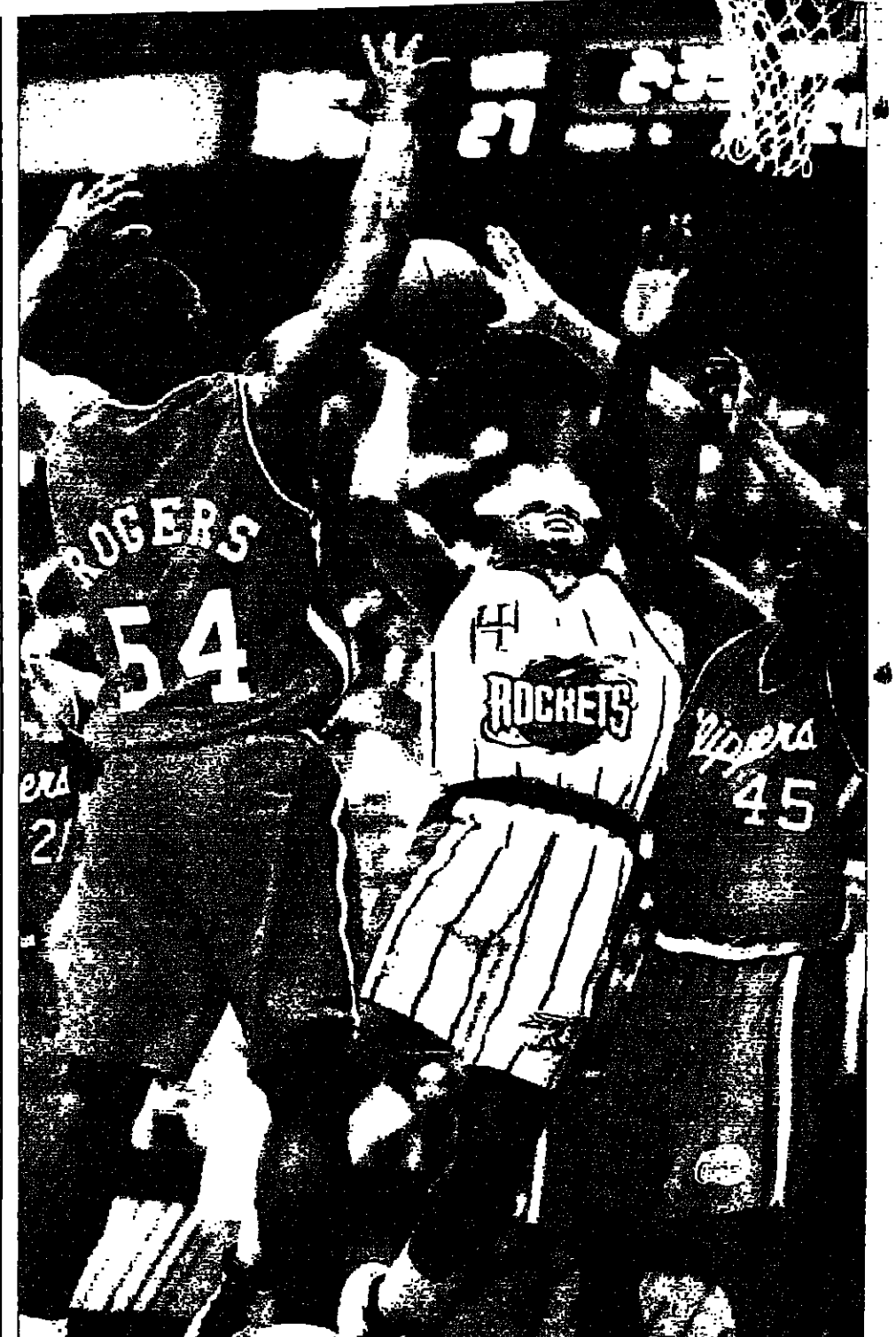
"He still has a lot of training to do but he should be fit and ready for the Motherwell game."

England are understood to have been represented at Kirkcaldy on Tuesday night but Hoddle's spy could scarcely have learned much with Rangers 5-0 up when Gascoigne came on, although he did create Ally McCoist's goal.

Gascoigne missed ten games for his club since injuring his ankle in a six-a-side tournament in Amsterdam at the end of January.

He also sat out England's World Cup defeat by Italy and the Wembley friendly win over Mexico last month.

If, as expected, he misses out on Georgia, Gascoigne could play in three final premier matches for Rangers in May to prove his fitness for the trip to Poland.



Houston Rockets forward Charles Barkley (C) shoots between the defense of Los Angeles Clippers Rodney Rogers (L) and Charles Outlaw during first half action. The Rockets were hosting the Clippers at the Summit in Houston (Reuters photo)

Malone leads Jazz to franchise-record 61st win

PHOENIX (R) — Karl Malone scored 31 points to lead his Utah Jazz to their franchise-record 61st victory of the season on Tuesday, a 127-122 triumph over the Phoenix Suns.

Jeff Hornacek scored 23 of his 27 points in the second half for the Jazz (61-18), who had already clinched the best record in the Western Conference.

With nothing on the line in terms of playoff position for Utah, the red-hot Jazz surpassed the previous club record of 60 wins set in 1994-95 with their 16th victory in 17 games.

"It was an important win for us," Malone said.

"I don't think they thought we would come in and play the kind of ball that we did. The so-called experts think that we are going to take the rest of the games off, but we are not," added Malone, who also pulled down 11 rebounds.

"A lot of guys made big shots, but it all started with Karl," said Hornacek. "They had to double him and that enabled the outside guys to swing around and get an open look."

Jason Kidd scored 28 points and Rex Chapman added 24 for the Suns (39-41), who fell a half game behind Minnesota in the race for sixth place in the West.

Antoine Carr scored 17 points. Bryon Russell hit a pair of clutch three-pointers in the fourth quarter and finished with 15 and John Stockton dished out 14 assists for the Jazz, who shot 58 per cent (45-of-78) from the field.

In Atlanta, Henry James tied an NBA record with seven three-pointers in a quarter and Mookie Blaylock made three huge

steals in the final minute as the Hawks overcame a 19-point fourth-quarter deficit to post a stunning 109-101 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

James, who did not play until the fourth quarter, scored 24 points for Atlanta, which opened a one-game lead over New York for the third playoff spot in the East.

James became the third player in NBA history to hit seven three-pointers in a quarter, joining teammate Steve Smith and John Roche of the Denver Nuggets.

"He was just hot, he was unconscious," he was unstoppable," said Nets guard Kendall Gill, who led New Jersey with 27 points.

"Hell, yeah, it's frustrating. You go up 19... It's not a good way to lose."

Blaylock finished with 17 points and Smith added 16 for the Hawks.

In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 24 points to lead a balanced attack as the Rockets built a 20-point lead and held on for a 123-119 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Charles Barkley and Eddie Johnson scored 23 points apiece and Matt Maloney added 19 for the Rockets (55-25), who moved a half game ahead of the Lakers into the third playoff spot in the West.

"A gigantic win for us in moving towards the home-court advantage," Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich

said. Rodney Rogers scored a career-high 34 points for the Clippers, who used an 11-0 run to cut the deficit to four points in the fourth quarter but got no closer.

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 24 points and Shawn Kemp added 22 and 12 rebounds as the SuperSonics beat up on the San Antonio Spurs 108-88 to move atop the Pacific Division.

Kemp scored 11 of his points in the second quarter as Seattle opened up a 20-point halftime lead.

The Sonics took a half game lead over the idle Los Angeles Lakers for the division lead and tied Houston for the second best record in the Western Conference.

Avery Johnson scored 17 points and Carl Herrera added 14 for the Spurs, who have lost 60 games for their worst record since going 21-61 in the 1988-89 season.

In Milwaukee, Glenn Robinson scored five of his 19 points in a key 12-2 fourth-quarter run as the Bucks rallied to a 92-85 victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Vin Baker and Armon Gilliam added 17 apiece for Milwaukee, which trailed by as many as 13 points in the first half before using a 20-7 third-quarter run to get back in the game.

Reggie Slater scored 19 points and Marcus Camby added 18 for Toronto.

RESULTS

Atlanta	109	New Jersey	101
Utah	127	Phoenix	122
Houston	123	LA Clippers	119
Milwaukee	92	Toronto	85
Seattle	108	San Antonio	88

Real Madrid clinch EuroCup

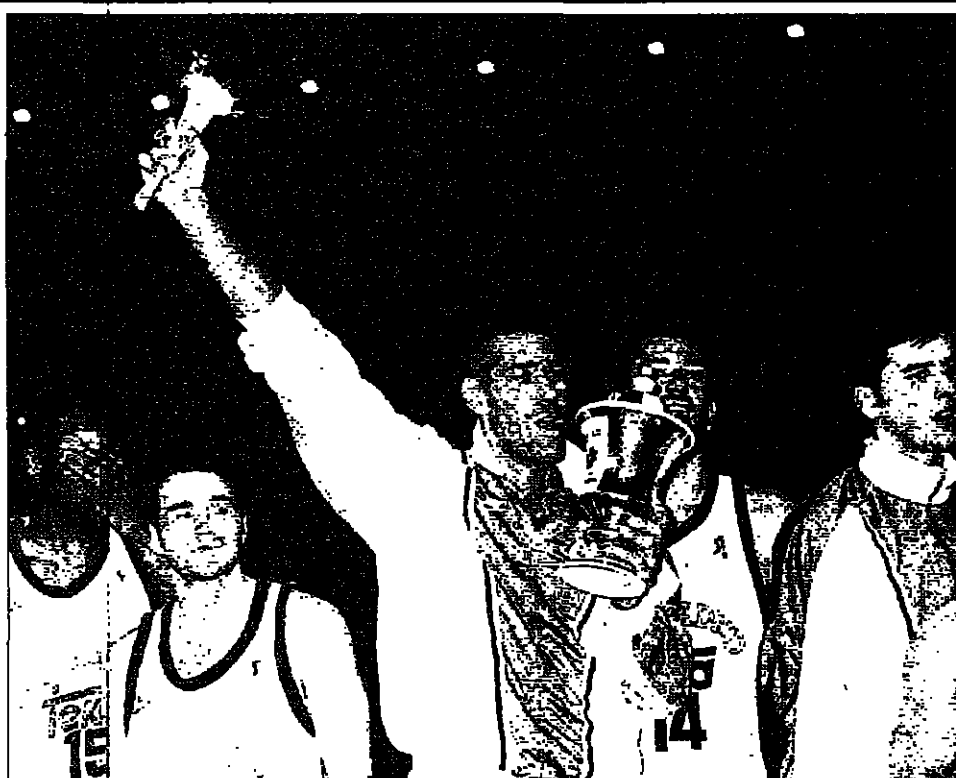
NICOSIA (R) — Ros Herreros scored 19 points and Josef Arlauckas added 18 to lead Real Madrid to a 78-64 win over Riello Verona in the EuroCup basketball final on Tuesday.

Real Madrid controlled the game almost from the start and the Italian team could get no closer than eight points in the final 15 minutes.

"I think the key for our success is the defence, we played very good defence," winning coach Zelimir Obradovic said.

The Spanish team raced to a 9-0 lead in the game's first four minutes with Herreros scoring five quick points.

Verona then closed the gap, taking the lead briefly at 18-17 with just over



Real Madrid players Michael Smith (L), Antonio Abrinjueta (2nd L), J. Arlauckas (C) and Antonio Forcada and Dejan Bodiroga (R) celebrate their win in the men's basketball EuroCup final in Nicosia. Real Madrid defeated Italy's Riello Verona 78-64 (Reuters photo)

seven minutes left in the half.

But nine points by

Herreros over the next three minutes put Real Madrid back in control and they led 36-30 at half time.

They stretched their advantage to 58-44 midway through the second half.

Muster struggles as seeds crash in Barcelona

BARCELONA (R) — Thomas Muster survived a scare in the first match of his Barcelona Open title defence on Tuesday before grinding out a three sets victory over Italy's Renzo Furlan.

But third seed Goran Ivanisevic and Wayne Ferreira, seeded sixth, crashed out to unfancied opponents and joined the five seeds eliminated on Monday.

Muster lost the opening set and seemed to be in trouble at 2-1 and 0-40 down in the second.

But the Austrian eventually found his length to force a series of vital backhand errors out of Furlan, and went on to seal a 5-7 6-4 6-4 second round victory with a rare ace on his first match point.

"It was complicated. It was my first real clay court match this season," said Muster.

For world number 10 Ferreira, defeated by Spain's Alberto Martin, ranked 168, completed a disastrous week in which he had already crashed out in Estoril to a player ranked more than 440 places below him.

Martin let the South African back to 4-1 after leading 4-1 in the third set, but was able to retake control and sealed victory with a full-blooded backhand return.

"I believed I could beat him. I'd never seen him play, but from the television I could tell he played well," said 18-year-old Martin after the 4-6 6-2 7-5 victory.

Croatia's Ivanisevic, nursing an injury to his right index finger, lost 6-2 6-3 in just 53 minutes to Karim Alami of Morocco.

A telling statistic was that the big-serving left-hander could only manage three aces. "There is a 99.9 per cent chance I will pull out Monte Carlo," he said.

Tenth seed Sergi Bruguera was fined \$1,000 by the ATP Tour for failing appear for the post-match press conference after Monday's three-set defeat by Marc Kevin Goellner.

Another fancied Spaniard, 11th seed Alex Corretja, lost to Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine in three sets just days after winning on clay in Estoril.

But former French Open finalist Alberto Berasategui, seeded ninth, lost only three games in beating fellow Spaniard Javier Sanchez.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "1"

Michael Douglas
& Val Kilmer ... in

THE GHOST AND
THE DARKNESS

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:634144
PHILADELPHIA "2"

Demi Moore.... in

STRIPTease

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238
PLAZA

Eddie Murphyin

METRO
Shows: 3:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
THE HUNCHBACK OF
NOTREDAME
Show: 5:00 p.m.

CINEMA TEL:677420
CONCORD

CONCORD "182"

Steven Segal...in

GLIMMER MAN
Sylvester Stallone ...in COBRA
Michael Jordan ...in SPACE JAM
Concord 1: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30
Concord 2: 12:00, 1:30, 3:00, 4:30, 6:00

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Leyritz comes back to haunt Yankees — again

NEW YORK (R) — Jim Leyritz, one of the New York Yankees' World Series heroes last year, is fast becoming the bane of his former club's existence.

Leyritz drilled a two-run double off closer Mariano Rivera with two outs in the ninth inning to lift the Anaheim Angels to a 6-5 victory over New York on Tuesday.

Leyritz, who went 4-for-5 with three RBI, lined an 0-1 pitch to left-center field, scoring Luis Alcega and Dave Hollins with the tying and winning runs.

Leyritz is batting .476 (10-for-21) with three home runs and eight RBI in five games against New York this season.

"It doesn't matter who you are playing against, it's always good to have nights like tonight," Leyritz said.

"After winning the World Series and everything that has gone on, it's a special feeling to come back and have two games like I did," added Leyritz, who also helped beat the Yankees with a two-run homer Monday.

"I don't like to say they made a mistake. I wasn't in their plans. I don't have any hatred toward the organization, they gave me seven good years."

Shigetoshi Hasegawa (1-0) struck out one in a perfect eighth inning to become the first Japanese native to win a game in the American League.

In Cleveland, the Indians also had a former teammate come back to haunt them when Paul Sorrento went 5-for-5, including a two-run double that sparked a four-run eighth inning and lifted the Seattle Mariners to an 8-4 victory.

Sorrento, who also drove

in four runs, tied a Seattle record for most hits in game.

Reliever Bob Wells allowed one run and one hit in one inning for the win as the Mariners won for the seventh time in their last nine games.

In Baltimore, Scott Kamieniecki and two relievers combined on a two-hitter and Jeff Rebutel homered against his former team and drove in two runs as the surging Orioles beat the Minnesota Twins 3-1 for their fifth straight victory.

Kamieniecki (1-0) limited Minnesota to one run and two hits with four walks and four strikeouts over the first five innings. Arthur Rhodes retired the next nine batters in order, striking out five, and Randy Myers pitched a perfect ninth for his league-leading sixth save.

During the five-game win streak, Baltimore pitching has compiled a 1.53 era.

In Boston, Aaron Sele allowed five hits over seven scoreless innings and Troy O'Leary and Nomar Garciaparra smacked solo homers as the Red Sox beat the Oakland A's 7-2.

Garciaaparra added a two-run triple in the eighth as the Red Sox got 11 hits off a pair of Oakland pitchers.

Steve Karsay (0-1) surrendered O'Leary's homer and was tagged for four runs and six hits in 4 2/3 innings. Don Wengert allowed three runs and five hits over 3 1/3 innings.

In Milwaukee, Tony Clark had three hits, including an opposite-field home run into a stiff wind, and Willie Blair allowed one run in seven-plus innings as the Detroit Tigers beat the

Brewers 3-1.

Detroit trailed by a run with two outs in the sixth when Travis Fryman singled and Clark hammered an offering from Scott Karl (0-3) just over the right-field wall for his fourth homer of the season and a 2-1 lead.

Blair (2-2) gave up an unearned run and five hits.

In Toronto, Jeff King had three hits, including a towering two-run homer into the fourth deck of Skydome, as the Kansas City Royals beat the Blue Jays 7-5.

Chili Davis went 3-for-3 with a walk for the Royals, who got five solid innings from starter Jose Rosado (1-0).

Rosado allowed three runs and six hits. Reliever Randy Veres added 2 1/3 scoreless innings and Hipolito Pichardo tossed a scoreless ninth for his third save.

Juan Guzman (0-1) was tagged for six runs and six hits over five innings — the shortest outing by a Toronto starter this season.

At Texas, Bobby Witt allowed two runs over 7 2/3 innings and Lee Stevens added a two-run homer as the Rangers defeated the Chicago White Sox 5-2.

Witt (2-0) scattered 11 hits without a walk and struck out two. His only mistakes were solo homers to Ray Durham and Harold Baines in the eighth.

Stevens' blast off James Baldwin (0-2) gave Texas a 5-0 lead in the bottom of the seventh. Rusty Greer went 3-for-3 with a run scored for the Rangers.

Baldwin gave up five runs and six hits in seven innings.

FA back European place for League Cup

LONDON (AFP) — The English Football Association promised on Wednesday to back the football league's attempt to reinstate a place in Europe for the winners of the League Cup.

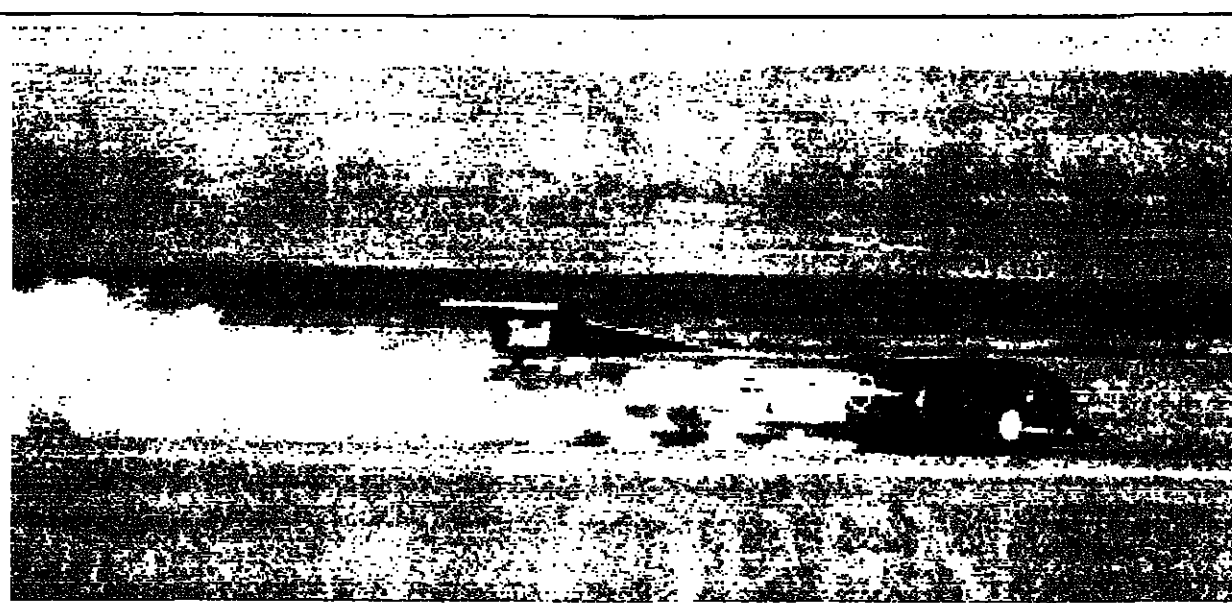
The victors of Wednesday night's final replay at Hillsborough between Leicester and Middlesbrough will be the last to claim a spot in next season's UEFA Cup via the competition.

Europe's governing body, UEFA, have decreed that lesser Cup competitions in countries where the top division has more than 18 teams will no longer carry a UEFA Cup berth for the winners after this season.

But following football league chairman David Sheepshanks' vow Tuesday to carry on the fight for the place in Europe, FA chief executive Graham Kelly has pledged his support for the bid.

"We've got a case about the World Cup 2006 in Geneva with UEFA tomorrow, so it is delicate at the moment," he said on Wednesday.

"But when that discussion is over, it is likely that the football association will be making a further approach to UEFA on behalf of the football league and the Coca-Cola Cup competition."



The Thrust SSC during one of its trial runs in Al Jafir Nov. 1996 (Reuters photo)

Thrust SSC makes a comeback

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With the aim of breaking the land speed record of 1,100 kilometres per hour (680 mph), the Thrust SSC super-sonic car team is scheduled to return to Jordan May 3.

The team's initial attempt was put on halt back in November due to heavy rains that flooded the area of Jordan's southeastern desert of Al Jafir.

The team's attempt was abandoned after reaching a speed of 500 kilometres per hour.

The Thrust team had arrived in Jordan Oct. 26, 1996 and after 16 days of preparation the first run was attempted on Nov. 12 at a speed of

368 kph (230 mph).

Maximum subsequent speed achieved was 529 kph (331 mph) when the car exhibited rear wheel shimmy (rapid steering oscillations).

Another attempt was aborted for the same reason later on.

By improving the suspension system, the car was ready to run but the floods prevented the crucial run.

The Thrust SSC team are in competition with the U.S. and Australian team to achieve the first ever super-sonic 1210 kph (750 mph) world land speed record.

The U.S. team reached 675 mph but subsequently crashed and are now into rebuilding.

The current world land speed record is 1019.44 kph (633.468 mph)

held by Richard Noble, project director of Thrust SSC since Oct. 4 1983.

Driven by British fighter pilot Andy Green, Thrust SSC weighs 10 tonnes has 106,000hp, twin jet engines, hydraulic suspension, active computer-controlled ride and rear wheel steering making it the most powerful car ever built.

The land speed record car has been modified and overhauled in England this winter and the team are now ready to return to Al Jafir to have further trials.

The team was helped by the Jordan Armed Forces in paving the track where the attempt took place.

The Thrust team now return with high hopes of good weather to assist them in their record breaking attempt.

Krajicek storms through to Japan Open 3rd round

TOKYO (AFP) — Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek fired home 14 aces to overcome windy conditions and beat Neville Godwin in the second round of the million-dollar Japan Open tennis tournament on Wednesday.

The top-seeded Dutch power-server, who found difficulty in hitting his best weapon against strong winds at the centre stadium, shrugged off a slow start by saving five break points in the opening game before scoring a 6-3, 6-4 win.

"I'm definitely not playing my best tennis at the moment," said Krajicek after the 83-minute bombardment.

"Wimbledon is one or two shots on grass courts tennis. I felt very confident there. Today, I had to work for every point. I no

longer can worry about whether I played a bad rally or a good rally.

I focus on just getting the point."

Krajicek had to save another three break points before taking the first set, but he started to serve in devastating form in the second set hitting 12 of the 14 aces and gave only one more break opportunity to the struggling South African.

"Basically my game suits his game. He likes speed. He's not somebody who can create a lot of speed, but he likes to play quick with not hitting too hard. I think that was the biggest problem," said Krajicek.

In the third round, he will take on 15th-seeded Magnus Norman of Sweden, the winner over Justin Gimelstob of the United States 6-4, 6-2.

Lionel roux of France had to eliminate his friend Jean-Philippe Fleurian to secure a place against three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker of Germany, second seed.

Roux, who had a great week by reaching his first ATP final in Osaka three years ago, needed a tough 106 minutes against Fleurian's aggressive chip-and-charge tactics to score a 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 victory on an outside court.

Becker, three-time Wimbledon champion from Germany, needed three sets to beat Canadian Sebastien Lareau Tuesday in his first match after a two-months layoff due to a right wrist injury.

In other matches, Henrik Holm of Sweden, whose highest ranking of 17th in 1993 plummeted to 249 this week following a 10-month break with a shoul-

der injury last season, continued coming his way back to the world.

Holm scored a 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 win, smashing Mikael Tillstrom's overnight celebrity status from winning his first career title at the Indian Open in Madras last weekend.

Australia's Patrick Rafter and doubles specialist Mark Woodforde, Americans Jeff Tarango and Jonathan Stark, and Thomas Johansson of Sweden joined Krajicek and Becker into the third round.

Shuzo Matsuoka became the only local hope in the men's field as he eliminated fellow Japanese Hideki Kaneko 7-5, 6-1.

Robinson remembered, Cubs hope to forget

CHICAGO (R) — As baseball remembered Jackie Robinson on the 50th anniversary of the day he broke the Major League colour barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers, the Chicago Cubs were trying to forget their own regrettable mark on the National League history books Tuesday.

Larry Walker went 4-for-4 with two homers and four RBI to lead the Colorado Rockies to a 10-7 victory over winless Chicago, placing the Cubs into the record books for the worst start in modern National League history at 11-0.

The Cubs are still 10 losses shy of the Major League mark for the worst start to a season of 0-21 set by the American League Baltimore Orioles in 1988.

"I'm confident we're going to turn this around," Cubs manager Jim Riggleman said.

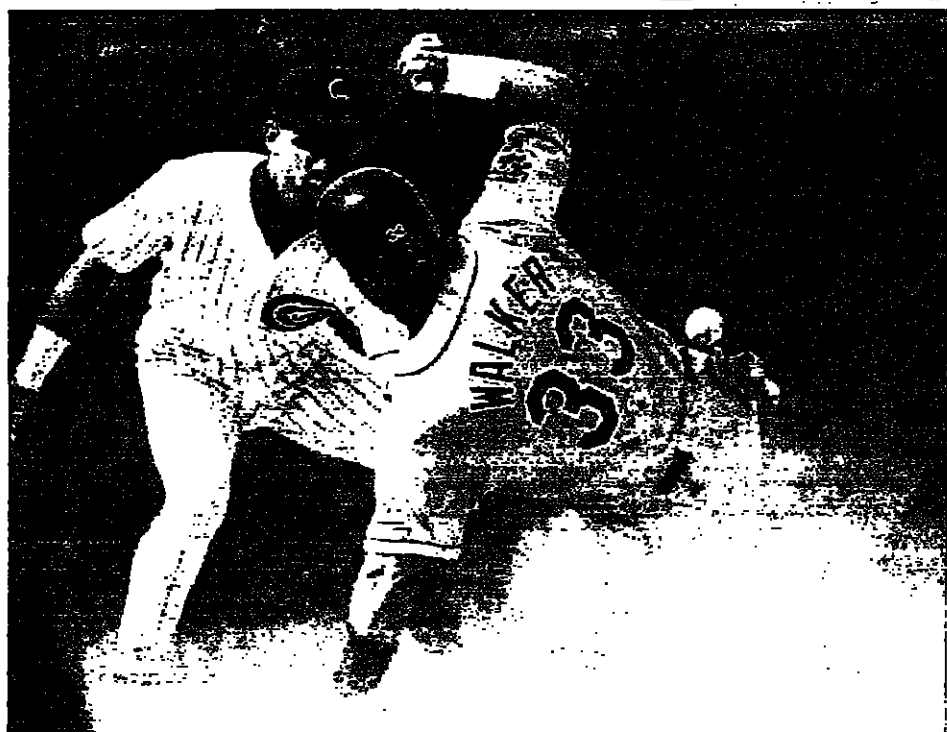
Colorado pitcher Mark Thompson raised his record to 3-0 despite allowing six runs and eight hits. He also added his first career homer — a solo shot in a three-run fifth inning that widened Colorado's lead to 9-5.

Walker's second four-hit game of the season raised his batting average to a Major League-leading .522. He also leads the Majors with nine homers and 22 RBI.

"This is certainly the best start I've ever had in my career," said Walker, who is 7-for-8 with seven RBI in his last two games.

In New York, Armando Reynoso tossed five scoreless innings and Lance Johnson added four RBI as the Mets snapped a four-game losing streak with a 5-0 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Jackie Robinson night at Shea Stadium.

Toby Borland tossed the final four innings for his first save as the Mets got their first shutout of the season.



Chicago Cubs' Jose Hernandez bobbles a throw from catcher Scott Servais to allow Colorado Rockies' Larry Walker to steal second during fourth inning action at Wrigley Field. The Cub's 10-7 loss to the Rockies broke the 1988 Atlanta Braves record for the worst National League season start, as they fell to 0-11 (Reuters photo)

The game was halted for some 30 minutes after the fifth inning as baseball paid tribute to Robinson.

In the Major League park closest to the former Ebbets Field, where Robinson thrilled fans and led Brooklyn to six pennants in 10 years, President Bill Clinton and Robinson's widow, Rachel, took part in a ceremony at second base — the position Robinson played for most of his career.

In an unprecedented move, acting commissioner Bud Selig announced that Robinson's uniform number 42 would be retired throughout the Major Leagues.

In Atlanta, John Smoltz pitched a six-hitter for his 10th career shutout and Jeff Blauser and Ryan Klesko delivered RBI triples as the Braves blanked the Cincinnati Reds 4-0.

Smoltz (2-2), the 1996 Cy Young award winner, walked two and struck out seven as he outdueled former teammate Mercker to hand Atlanta its fourth straight win.

Blauser tripled home a run in the second and Klesko had a run-scoring triple in the third and scored on an infield hit by Chipper Jones as the Braves won for

the 10th time 11 games.

At Florida, Brady Raggio allowed two runs and five hits over 5 1/3 innings to win his Major League debut as the St. Louis Cardinals rolled to a 9-3 victory over the Marlins.

Dmitri Young and Tom Lampkin had RBI triples and Delino Deshields singled in two runs and scored twice for St. Louis (4-8), which has won four of its last six games after a franchise-record six straight losses to start the season.

In Philadelphia, Jeff Kent continued his torrid hitting with a homer and three RBI and Marvin Benard's two-out pinch-hit RBI single capped a four-run sixth inning as the San Francisco Giants rallied for an 8-4 win over the Phillies.

Mark Lewis doubled in two runs and J.T. Snow added a two-run single for San Francisco (9-3), which has its first five-game winning streak since July 1994.

In Pittsburgh, Sterling Hitchcock hit Tony Womack with a pitch in the bottom of the ninth inning to force home Jose Guillen with the winning run and give the Pirates a 3-2 victory over the San Diego Padres.

In Houston, Pedro Mar-

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMARA HIRSCH

INVASION FROM THE NORTH

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A 7 6 3
♥ K J 6 5 3
♦ A 7 6
♣ 4 6

WEST
♠ Q 10 8 8
♥ A 10 7 4 2
♦ Q 10
♣ 10 4

EAST
♠ 5 4
♥ Q
♦ K 8 5 4 3 2
♣ K Q J 7

SOUTH
♠ K 3 2
♥ 8
♦ Q J 9
♣ A 9 8 5 3 2

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♣ Pass 2♣ Pass 2NT Pass
3♣ Pass 3♣ Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♠

Championship, Helgemo reached two no trump on the above auction. Since, in the modern style, a rebid of three clubs would show a minimum two-over-one response with little besides a good club suit, Helgemo was forced to find some other rebid and, despite the unbalanced nature of the hand, two no trump was the only reasonable alternative.

West gave declarer a helping hand by leading the ten of spades, run to the jack in the closed hand. Helgemo played the hand as if the cards had glass backs. The queen of diamonds was passed to East's king, and the spade return was taken with the king.

Declarer led the eight of hearts and, when West followed low, called for the table's king, fetching East's queen. A club was ducked to West's ten, and the spade return was won on the table. South came to hand with the jack of diamonds, cashed the ace of clubs, then crossed to the ace of diamonds to lead the last spade.

West won but, down to nothing but hearts, could not stop the jack of hearts from becoming declarer's eighth trick. At the other table, three no trump failed by two tricks.

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WEST BANK CLOSURE: Palestinian youth forced off a passenger bus on its way from the West Bank into Jerusalem on Wednesday. Inside, an Israeli soldier gathers identity cards from Palestinian passengers and checks their papers while another armed soldier stands guard inside the door, and a policeman outside. Israel last night closed its borders to Palestinians for an indefinite time due to warnings that Palestinian guerrillas were planning an attack on Israeli targets. The closure does not affect Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who work in Israel (Reuters photo)

'Bibigate' rocks Israeli politics, threatens Netanyahu's cabinet

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The scandal over the appointment of an attorney general, tarnishing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's record, could lead to a government reshuffle or even its downfall, analysts warned on Wednesday.

State prosecutor Edna Arbel is examining the results of a three-month police investigation which recommended on Tuesday that legal action be taken against Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi.

Police also called for charges to be filed against Mr. Netanyahu's chief of staff Avigdor Lieberman for breach of trust and the Shas Party leader, Ariel Deri, for "attempted blackmail."

Ms. Arbel said she would take a decision before Monday night, when the Jewish Passover starts.

She may only recommend a formal reprimand against Mr. Hanegbi over the appointment of obscure Jerusalem lawyer Roni Bar-On as attorney general, an affair revealed by Israeli state-run television in January.

A 995-page police document of recommendations compiled from the questioning of 60 people, including Mr. Netanyahu, was not made public.

The three-month probe began with the television report focused on allegations of

conspiracy, fraud and breach of trust surrounding the appointment of Mr. Bar-On, a senior member of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party.

According to the report, Mr. Deri conditioned his support in a key government vote over the peace process with the Palestinians on the appointment of Mr. Bar-On as attorney general.

In exchange for his support, Bar-On was slated to lift fraud and bribery charges facing Mr. Deri, according to the allegations on television.

Judicial sources said no action could be taken against Mr. Netanyahu himself without "cast-iron proof." But even if the case is closed, on the grounds of insufficient evidence, it will have a political fall-out on the government.

Officials in Shas are already threatening to quit the ruling coalition and force new elections.

"If Mr. Deri is taken to court, Shas will leave the coalition and the government will lose its majority and fall," a party official told Likud and the Labour opposition, quoted in Israeli newspapers.

"Mr. Netanyahu will have to resign and new elections to the Knesset (parliament) and for prime minister will be called," he said.

The prime minister's image, even if only the implicated figures from Mr. Netanyahu's administration are reprimanded, will be damaged in public eyes, the newspaper Maariv said.

It said the state prosecutor could have to bow to pressure from public opinion and press charges against Mr. Netanyahu and his top aides.

Mr. Hanegbi, Mr. Deri and Mr. Lieberman will have to go quietly "for the earthquake to be avoided and for the option of a national unity government" with Labour leader Shimon Peres to arise, Maariv said.

"Let no-one be fooled, the police recommendations already amount to an earthquake," warned another newspaper, Yediot Aharanot.

After heated opposition to his appointment by government and opposition members alike, Mr. Bar-On resigned after only two days on the job as attorney general.

Several ministers have been questioned by police in the so-called "Bibigate" investigation — a play on the premier's nickname "Bibi" and the Watergate scandal which brought down U.S. President Richard Nixon.

Israeli weapons dealer linked to Iran arrested

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli millionaire linked to illegal weapons sales to Iran was arrested after arriving in Israel on a flight from Rome, Israeli media reported Wednesday.

The businessman, Nahum Manbar, was taken into custody March 27 at Ben-Gurion International Airport, but journalists were barred from reporting on the detention until Wednesday.

Israeli Radio said it was not clear whether Mr. Manbar had boarded the flight from Rome to Tel Aviv voluntarily.

A Tel Aviv magistrate ordered Mr. Manbar held for nine more days Wednesday, but barred journalists from reporting the allegations against him. The judge said the suspicions were very grave and, if proven, would keep Mr. Manbar in prison for a long time, according to Israeli radio.

Mr. Manbar's attorney, Amnon Zichroni, could not immediately be reached for comment Wednesday.

In July 1994, the U.S. State Department said Mr. Manbar and two of his companies violated a U.S. trade embargo against Iran by selling components of chemical weapons used in the production of mustard and nerve gas, according to recent Israeli media reports. Mr. Manbar was barred from entering the United States, the reports said.

The Haaretz daily reported Wednesday that the U.S. demanded earlier this month that Israel act against Mr. Manbar, but did not request his extradition.

Mr. Manbar's case was raised in meetings last week between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. officials in Washington, including the acting CIA chief, Haaretz said. The head of the Israeli spy agency Mossad, Danny Yatom, also participated, the newspaper said.

Haaretz said the CIA recently passed information to Israel concerning Mr. Manbar's connections with Iran.

Netanyahu's senior aide, David Bar-Ilan, said Wednesday he was unaware of any U.S. requests in connection with Mr. Manbar, but that he would check further.

Mr. Manbar left Israel in the 1980s and has homes in Switzerland and France. Haaretz said Mr. Manbar built up a \$200 million business, starting with arms deals in Poland in the late 1980s, and eventually made contact with Iran. An Iranian minister connected to the weapons industry was appointed to deal directly with Mr. Manbar, and the two met dozens of times in Europe, the newspaper said.

In a December 1995 interview with Haaretz, Mr. Manbar said he was not the only Israeli dealing with Iran. "No one here is stupid enough to believe that Nahum Manbar, on his own, can make connections with Iran out of thin air. Somebody caught me in their net, but I am far from the only one... You have no idea how many Israelis are involved."

In that interview, Mr. Manbar denied that he sold Iran materials that originated in China and were used in making poison gas.

Iranians hold second 'disavowal' in Mecca

MECCA (AFP) — Thousands of Iranian Muslims held a "disavowal of the pagans" rally Wednesday at the annual Hajj pilgrimage near Mecca in Saudi Arabia, the official news agency IRNA reported Wednesday.

It said the demonstration against the United States and Israel was organized at the Iranian pilgrims' camp on Mount Arafat, where the Hajj reaches its climax with prayers.

Foreign pilgrims also took part as the cry of "disavowal to the pagans" was raised throughout the camp, it said. A message from Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was read out to the crowd.

In a tragedy at nearby Mina on Tuesday, at least 217 pilgrims, mostly Asians, died when a fire swept through their camps. There was no report of Iranian casualties in the blaze.

About 5,000 Iranian pilgrims already demonstrated Monday against the United States and Israel in Mecca in defiance of Saudi authorities before being dispersed by security forces, witnesses said.

The Iranians chanted "death to

Israel, death to America."

The head of the Iranian pilgrims' delegation, Mohammad Mohammadi Rey-Shahri had said the pilgrims would hold their traditional demonstration in spite of Saudi warnings.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, Tehran has regularly urged its pilgrims to organize "disavowal of the pagans" demonstrations in Mecca.

The Saudi kingdom, which as custodians of Islam's holiest sites is having to cope this year with almost two million pilgrims, has imposed a strict ban on political demonstrations.

The highest Saudi religious dignitary, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, said the Iranian demonstrations amounted to heresy and should be banned.

In the past, such demonstrations have led to clashes between Iranian pilgrims and Saudi security forces. In 1987, more than 400 people were killed in such clashes.

The two Muslim countries broke off diplomatic relations between 1988 and 1991, but their ties have been improving this year.

Australia will not impose trade sanctions on Iran

CANBERRA (AFP) — The Australian government is not considering trade sanctions against Iran and contracts for massive grain exports are not threatened, Trade Minister Tim Fischer said Wednesday.

"Australia does not seek to interfere with the commercial negotiations, be it by the Australian Wheat Board, by a large company or by a small company, with regard to the two-way trade that exists between Australia and Iran," Mr. Fischer told reporters.

Australia this week recalled its ambassador in Tehran, Stuart Hume, for consultations after a German court found Iran had sponsored terrorism.

Iran retaliated by recalling its ambassadors and cancelling a visit to Tehran next month by an Australian-Iran Chamber of Commerce and Industry delegation.

A spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer said he had met with Mr. Hume and ministers were seeking more detail about the reasons for the German verdict.

"We won't be taking any unilateral or hasty decisions," the spokesman said.

Australian Wheat Board Chairman Trevor Flunge said Wednesday the board was confident the government could handle any political problems with countries to which it sold wheat.

"Both Iran and Australia see our trade as very important to their countries... both sides would be reluctant to bring that trade into jeopardy," he said.

Flunge placed wheat sales this year so far to Iran at between two and three million tonnes, worth about \$390 million.

Yousef, a 26-year-old Pakistani, was extradited to the United States in February 1995. He was convicted in 1996 of a terrorist attack in Asia on an American target and faces a possible life term. No date for sentencing has been set.

The probe was launched in 1995 following repeated allegations by one of the FBI's employees, Frederic Whitehurst, a chemist in the explosives section, that the laboratory was rife with problems such as perjury, mishandling of evidence and faulty procedures.

Yousef's trial is scheduled to begin on July 14.

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